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ILLUSTRATIONS

OF THE

PASSES OF THE ALPS,

BY WHICH

ITALY

COMMUNICATES WITH

FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, AND GERMANY.

BY

WILLIAM BROCKEDON,

MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS AT FLORENCE.

VOLUME THE FIRST;

CONTAINING

THE LITTLE ST. BERNARD ; THE MONT GENÈVRE ; THE MONT CENIS ;
THE MONT ST. GOTHARD ; THE GREAT ST. BERNARD ;
AND THE STELVIO.

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THE PLATES

CONTAINED IN VOLUME THE FIRST.

PASS OF THE LITTLE ST. BERNARD.

1. Scene near La Tuille. Title Vignette.
2. Vale of Gresivaudan, from the Château Bayard.
3. The Roche Blanche.
4. Scene from the Little Saint Bernard, looking towards the Tarentaise.
5. Colonne de Joux, and Hospice of the Little Saint Bernard.
6. Mont Blanc, from the Baths of St. Didier.
7. Mont Blanc, and the Val d'Aosta above Fort Roe.
8. Ascent of the Little St. Bernard from the Tarentaise. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from Grenoble to Aosta.

PASS OF THE MONT GENÈVRE.

1. Fall of the Romanche, near Villard d'Arène. Title Vignette.
2. The Fort of Fenestrelles.
3. Scene from the Ascent to the Mont Genève.
4. Briançon.
5. Val de Guisane, from the Col de Lautaret.
6. Scene in the Val Romanche.
7. Grenoble, from the road to Vizille.
8. Obelisk, and Bourg Mont Genève. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from Turin to Grenoble, by Fenestrelles, the Mont Genève, and the Val Romanche.

PASS OF THE MONT CENIS.

1. The Lake and Plain of Mont Cenis. Title Vignette.
2. Lyons, from the Confluence of the Rhone and Saone.
3. Montmeillan.
4. Fort Lesseillon near Bramante.
5. Ascent of the Grand Croix, from the Plain of Saint Nicholas.
6. Monastery of St. Michel above Saint Ambrogio.
7. Turin and the Alps, from the Mont Superga.
8. Valley of the Arc, from above St. Michel. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from Lyons to Turin, by the Mont Cenis.

PASS OF THE MONT ST. GOTHARD.

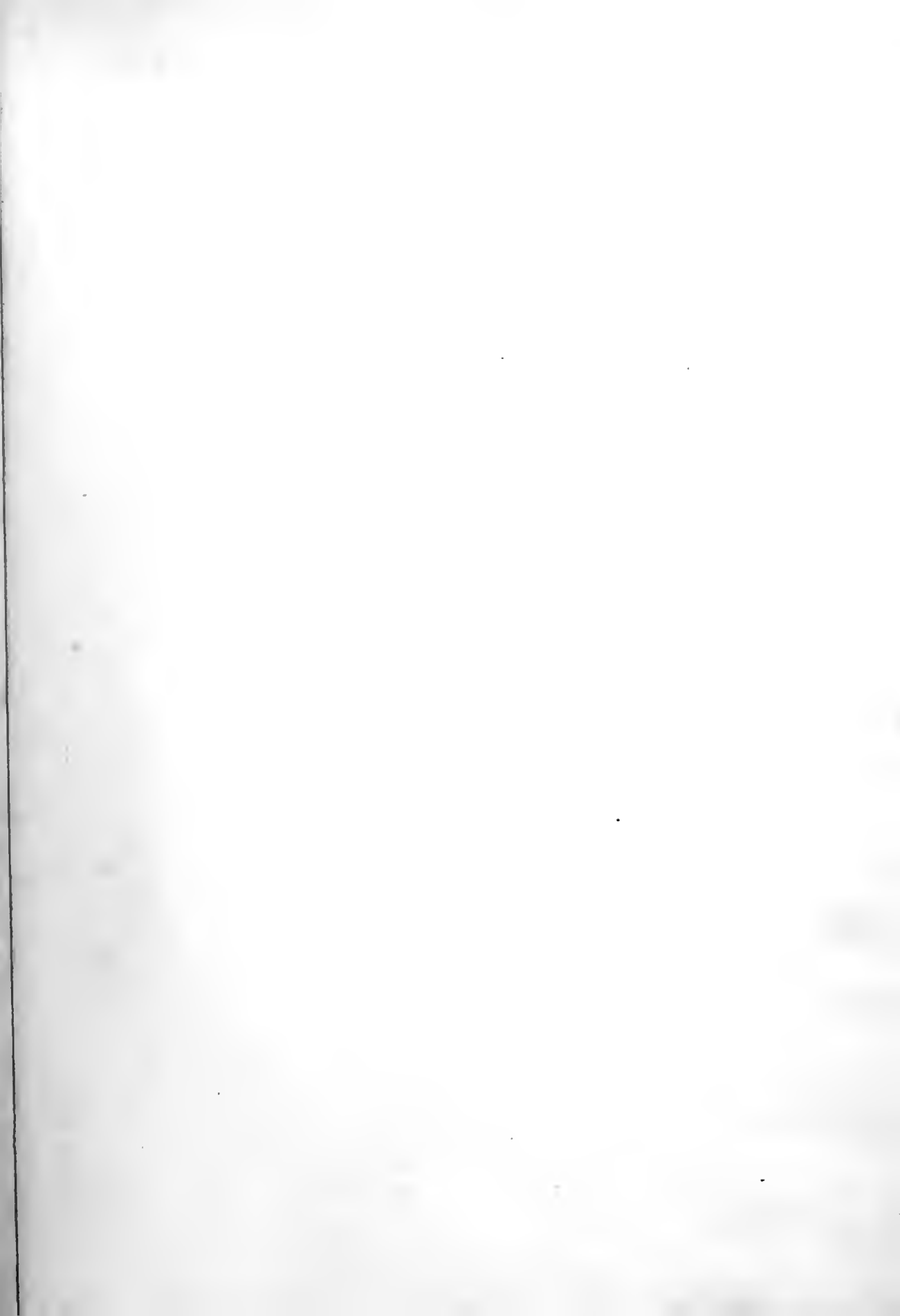
1. The Devil's Bridge. Title Vignette.
2. Bellinzona, from Samentina.
3. Airolo and the Val Levantine.
4. Ponte Tremola.
5. The Summit of the Pass of the St. Gothard.
6. Scene in the Valley of the Reuss, above Goschenen.
7. Tell's Chapel, from the Lake of Uri.
8. Tell's Tower, Altorf. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from the Lago Maggiore to the Lake of Uri.

PASS OF THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.

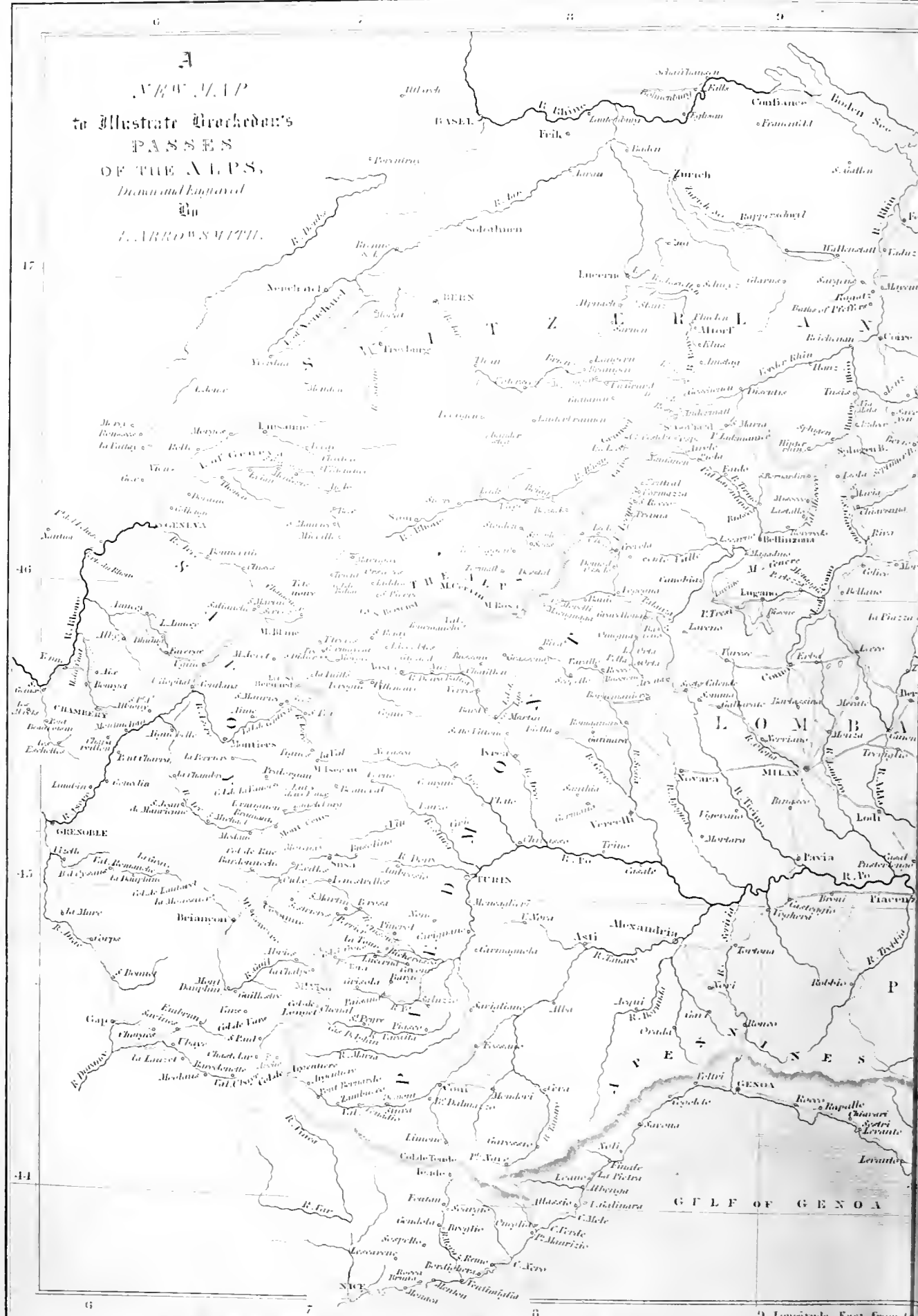
1. Hospice of the Great Saint Bernard. Title Vignette.
2. The Valley of the Rhone above Martigny.
3. Scene in the Forest of St. Pierre.
4. Lake of the Great Saint Bernard, from the Hospice.
5. Descent from the Great Saint Bernard on the side of Italy.
6. The Valley and City of Aosta, from the Château Quart.
7. Château of Saint Germain, from the Defile of Mont Jovet.
8. Gate of Bourg Saint Pierre. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from Martigny to Ivrea, by the Great Saint Bernard.

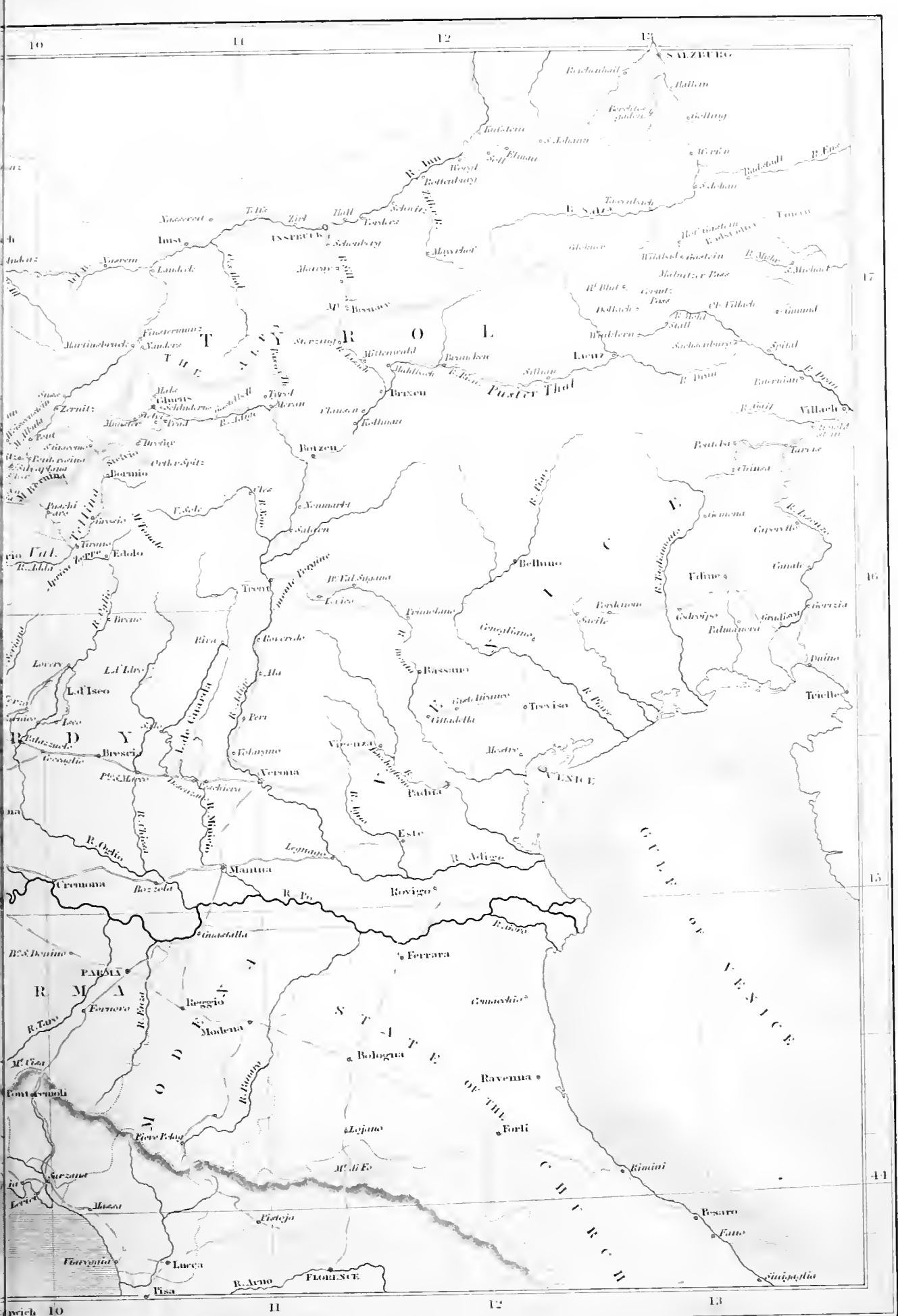
PASS OF THE STELVIO.

1. Galleries in the Wurmser-loch. Title Vignette.
2. The Vale of Meran, from the old Castle of Tyrol.
3. The Örtler-spitz, from the Summit of the Stelvio Pass.
4. The Baths of Bormio.
5. Sondrio.
6. Lecco.
7. Como, from the Road to Erba.
8. The Château of Gastenbell. End Vignette.
9. Map of the Route from Botzen to Milan, by the Pass of the Stelvio.



A
N.W. MAP
to Illustrate Breckedon's
PASSES
OF THE ALPS.
Drawn and Engraved
By
J. ARROWSMITH.









PAGE NEAR LA TUIELLE.

This is a detailed map of the Grenoble region in France, showing the Isère river and its tributaries. The map includes numerous place names such as Grenoble, Chambéry, St. Jean, and St. Pierre. It also features a scale bar and a north arrow.

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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FROM GREENBOLT TO POST IN THE PACE OF THE LITTLE S' DEPARTED.

ROUTE

FROM

GRENOBLE TO AOSTA,

BY THE

PASS OF THE LITTLE SAINT BERNARD.

THIS route presents to the traveller some of the most beautiful scenes of Dauphiny, of the Tarentaise, and of Piedmont. Excellent carriage-roads through the vale of Gresivaudan conduct, on either side of the river Isere, to the great route of the Cenis; that on its right bank leads by Lumbin, Fort Barraud, and Chapareillan on the frontiers of Savoy, to the Cenis road, between Chamberry and Montmelian: on the left bank the road passes through Goncelin and Pont Charra, the last town on the French frontiers, and falls into the route of the Cenis at the village of Planèse, where Montmelian, its old fort,* and the valley of the Isere, present one of the finest views between Lyons and Turin.

The vale of Gresivaudan, or plain of Grenoble, one of the richest in France in corn, wine, and other products of the soil, is nowhere surpassed in scenes of picturesque beauty. From the road to Lumbin the views towards the south-east are

* It was formerly considered one of the strongest fortifications in Europe: the treachery of the governor gave it to the possession of Henry the Fourth of France in 1600. Whilst he was besieging it, he narrowly escaped with his life from a cannon-shot; and his son, Louis the Thirteenth, after having invested it fifteen months, was compelled by its gallant defender, Bens de Cavour, to raise the siege. The fort was demolished by the French in 1703, and has never since been restored.

bounded by the lofty range of mountains which forms the northern side of the Val Romanche, and from the left bank of the Isere the opposite mountains appear, by their proximity, to hang over the road beneath them; in bold and precipitous masses.

At the upper end of the valley there are some scenes which the traveller should visit. Near Chapareillan, the bold range of mountains which bounds the north-eastern side of the valley, and divides it from the Grand Chartreuse, terminates in Mont Grenier, part of which fell in 1249, and produced an interesting field for the researches of the geologist in the *Abymes de Myans*.

On the right of the road, ascending by Goncelin, near Pont Charra, are the ruins of the château Bayard, where the chevalier "*sans peur et sans reproche*" was born in the year 1476; the remains are not picturesque, except those of the old entrance; but the views from the ruined terrace are very fine, particularly towards Mont La Tuile, above Montmelian: in this direction the eye commands the scene from Pont Charra to Fort Barraud, the windings of the Isere, and beyond it the plain extending almost to Chamberry.*

At Montmelian, where the great road to the Cenis crosses the Isere, the traveller from Grenoble by Pont Charra enters upon the line of Hannibal's march into Italy. This subject of deep inquiry and great interest to the historian has been most ably illustrated in "*A Dissertation on the Passage of Hannibal over the Alps, by a Member of the University of Oxford*," which offers such clear and essential evidence as every one acquainted with the various passes of the Alps, and who is interested in the inquiry, must consider conclusive.† It traces the route of Hannibal into Italy from the Rhône, and shows that, after he had ascended the river and defeated the Allobroges, he passed the Mont du Chat, near Chamberry, thence

* Plate the first.

† There is a work on the same subject, which coincides with the "*Dissertation*," by M. J. A. de Luc, of which a second edition was published in 1825, at Geneva.



marched to Montmelian, and ascended by the right bank of the Isere to the passage of the Alps by the Little Saint Bernard.

From Montmelian to L'Hôpital Conflans, the road, which leads to the Tarentaise, ascends by the right bank of the Isere, through a succession of beautiful scenes, which are sometimes rendered more interesting by ruins of baronial castles. One of the most remarkable of these is the château Moilans, whose towers still seem to frown from their high rock on the passing traveller. In the early part of the sixteenth century this castle was purchased by one of the dukes of Savoy, and made the state prison of the duchy.

This part of the route abounds with villages, whose inhabitants appear to be numerous, and their industry is evinced by the highly cultivated state of the valley. L'Hôpital is situated on the right bank of the river Arly, which divides it from Conflans, and at the base of the hill, on the sides of which Conflans is built. A good street and excellent inns are scarcely expected by the English traveller, but these are to be found at L'Hôpital. The road up the valley of the Isere from Conflans makes a considerable turn from a north-east to a south-south-east direction, and above this inflection the scenes are more confined, and the lower ranges of mountains more richly wooded; the valley, through which there is an excellent road, is pastoral and retired in its character, though châteaux are still seen jutting out, on rocks and commanding situations, from the rich background of forest-trees. Some grand rocky scenes present themselves to the traveller before he arrives at the neat village of Aigue Blanche: beyond this place the valley narrows to a ravine, by the side of which there is a well-constructed road to Moutiers, the chief town of the Tarentaise. Moutiers is situated in a little plain nearly surrounded by mountains, and is celebrated for its salt-works, mines, and mineral springs.

From Moutiers a mule-road leads by the valley of the Doron, over the Col de la Vanoise, to Termignon, on the great road of the Mont Cenis; a journey of interest, and of easy accomplishment in the height of summer. At the distance of a few miles

from Moutiers the road passes by the hot and mineral baths of Brida, or, as they are called in the old records of Savoy, La Perrière:* they are now much resorted to by invalids. The temperature of the water is about 96° of Fahrenheit, and it contains about 140th part of saline matter.

On leaving Moutiers, to pursue the route to the Little Saint Bernard, the Isere is still ascended, but in another direction, nearly parallel to the road from Montmelian to Conflans: for a short distance the ascent is rapid, through a ravine; then leaving the Isere, the road passes by the village of St. Marcel, and encounters the river again at *Le Saut de la Purcelle*, a tremendous gorge, at whose base the Isere is seen forcing its passage. The road is carried over the rocks three hundred feet, nearly perpendicular, above the river, to enter the valley of Centron, where, though the vine is still cultivated, and the valley is studded with villages, it assumes a comparatively sterile appearance; the mountain-side, which abruptly descends to the river, is clothed with pines, which now prevail among the foliage; and the mountains of the Little Saint Bernard close the vista.

After passing the village of Centron, the traveller enters, near the middle of the valley, the old town of Ayme, formerly the Forum Claudii of the Centrones; it is rich in Roman inscriptions and other evidences of early importance: the road passes through it, and continues to Bourg St. Maurice.

The plain in which this town is situated extends itself beyond Seez, up the valley of the Isere, which is a wider and more obvious route to a passage by the Alps than that which leads by the valley of the Reclus, as it presents the course of the larger stream; and the traveller is not at first prepared for the true road, by the Reclus, to the Little Saint Bernard, because this turns off to the left from Seez by a lateral valley, through which it flows into the Isere. Formerly a path led by the right bank of the Reclus; but an ill-paved and worse-preserved road

* There is an account of these baths in Bakewell's interesting Travels in the Tarentaise.



now conducts, on the other side, by Notre Dame des Neiges and Villars, to the *Roche Blanche* ; * at the foot of which the river is crossed by a good bridge, and the road winds up the mountain, by a tolerable mule-path, to Saint Germain, the last village of the Tarentaise. The Roche Blanche is a vast mass of gypsum, appearing to close the valley of the Reclus, which struggles amongst the rocks at its steep base ; its summit is covered with pines ; and, as a military position, its occupation secures the defence of the pass, whilst its occupants might march from its summit to the Col † of the Little Saint Bernard, without again descending, as the mass of exposed gypsum, which gives name to the rock, is protruded, like a headland from the mountain, at the upper end of the little plain of Villars.

The Roche Blanche is a remarkable feature in this passage, not only from its geological character, but from its historical connexion with the invasion of Italy by Hannibal. The evidence of its being the *White Rock* mentioned by Polybius, where Hannibal took up his position to defend his army from the assaults of the Centrones, during its ascent of the valley, will be found in the “ Dissertation ” already mentioned.

While the author of these Illustrations was sketching the Roche Blanche, a respectable-looking farmer on horseback, who was passing, rested for a moment, and said, “ That, sir, is the Roche Blanche : formerly a great general called Hannibal passed this way with his army, and fought a battle here.” Tradition is good collateral evidence, though of little value alone. On many other passes of the Alps the name of Hannibal has been left by inquirers into this interesting subject, and become familiar to the peasantry. The Viso, the Cenis, the Genève, and the Grand Saint Bernard, have their traditions ; and even on the snows and glaciers of the Cervin, the author was told by his guide that the fort of St. Theodule, situate on that mountain, was built by Hannibal in his passage there ; and talked of *Tite-Live* and *Polybe* as authority for his assertions.

* Plate the second.

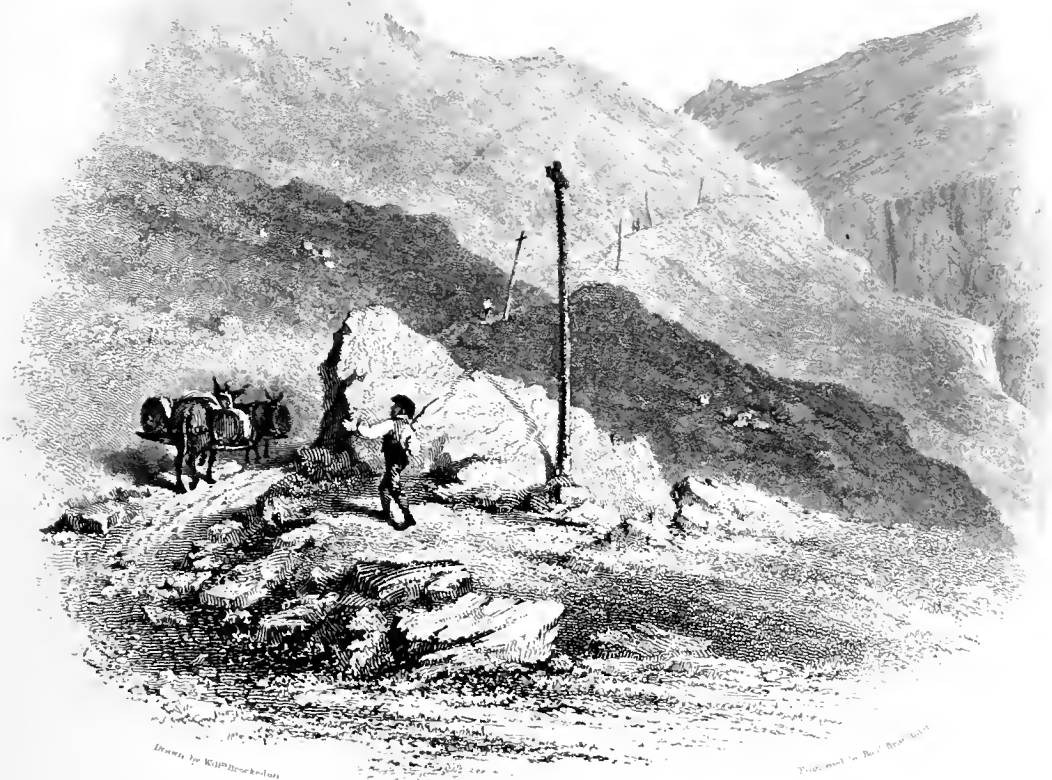
† The Col is the highest traversable part of a mountain.

The traditions, however, of the passage of Hannibal by the Little Saint Bernard assume a higher character ; they are not confined to the pass of the mountain, but may be traced on this route from the Rhône to Turin. The old Roman road over the Graian Alps passed to the right of the Roche Blanche ; at present, a modern path on the other side, through Saint Germain, conducts by an easy ascent above the village to the Hospice and plain of the Col :* the heavy snows which fall here in winter have induced the precaution of raising poles at certain distances to guide the traveller ; sometimes these posts have cross-pieces nailed on at the top, rather to assist the traveller's course by their direction than from any religious motive. It would employ about three hours to walk from the Roche Blanche to the Hospice on the summit of this pass. About half-way up, the view, on looking back, is striking : the valley of Centron, the road winding down the mountain to Saint Germain, the side of the Roche Blanche hanging over the Reclus, and the beautiful forms of the Mount Iseran, combine to form a fine Alpine scene.†

The Hospice on the summit is on the brink of the descent to the Tarentaise : bread, butter, and cheese, sometimes meat, and always wine, may be had there. In 1824 it was occupied by a man and his wife, with a family of hardy children. He is stationed there by the Sardinian government, and remains all the year : he is directed to assist and relieve the poor traveller gratis ; but those who can afford to pay, discharge the expenses which they incur as they would at an inn. It was formerly held by some monks from the Great Saint Bernard, whose cells and little chapel are now in ruins ; these have been left so since the year 1794, when, during the wars of Italy, France poured her republican soldiery through the defiles of the Alps. The summit of the Little Saint Bernard was then the site of some military operations, not surpassed by any deeds of daring in those regions ; but though they want the mystery and

* End vignette.

† Plate the third.



Drawn by K. M. H. H. H. H.

Engraved by J. H. H. H. H.



Engraved by W. J. Bennett.

magnitude which the mists of time throw over distant events, the heroism displayed in the conquest of this pass is not forgotten in the annals of France. On the 24th of April, 1794, a division under General A. Dumas, armed only with swords and muskets, and at this most difficult and dangerous season, attacked the stations of the Austria-Sardinians on these mountains. After having for two days struggled through the accumulated snows, and crossed precipices, to contend with indestructible ramparts, bristled with artillery, and defended by superior numbers, they forced a triple redoubt on Mont Valaisan, carried a position of 1200 men on the Belveder, and compelled the guardians of the pass to defend themselves at the Hospice, which was laid in ruins; for against this position the cannon of the conquered redoubts were turned, and the French soon drove their enemies from this disastrous post, to take refuge in the valleys of Piedmont.

The plain on the summit, from the Hospice to the commencement of the descent to La Tuille, is above two miles long and about a mile in width; here Hannibal encamped his army two days, to refresh his soldiers and wait for stragglers. This place has a very convenient extent for the temporary rest of 25,000 men, to which number the army of Hannibal was now nearly reduced. He had passed the Rhône with 40,000; and Polybius states, that, on entering the plains of Italy, they were reduced to little more than half that number. The lake of Vernai, or of the Little Saint Bernard, is the source of the Doira Baltea, and does not occupy any part of the plain, but is situated far below it, at its northern extremity, at the base of the mountains which form the north-west boundary of the Col; its surface is not equal to one-hundredth part of the extent of the plain.

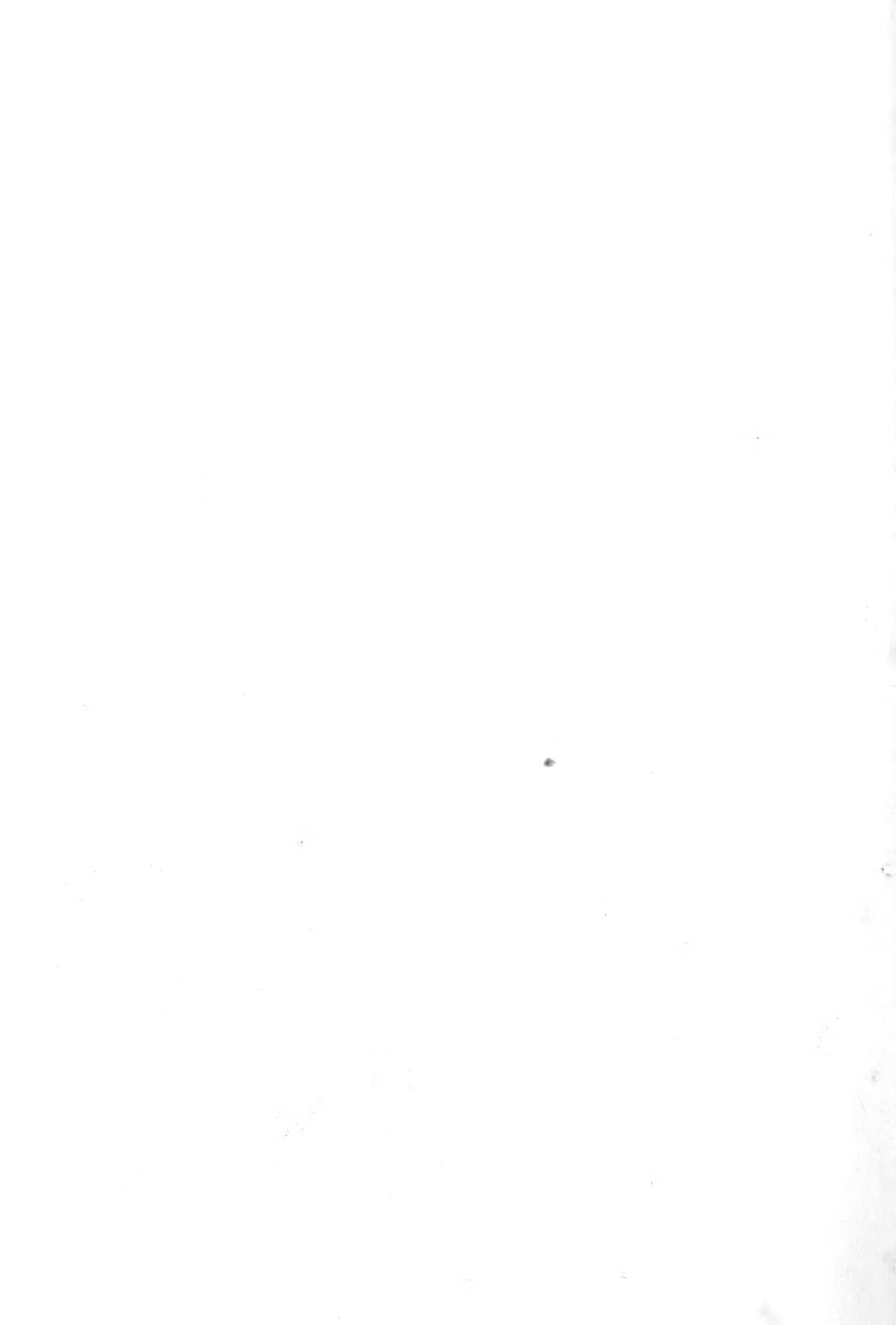
About twelve hundred yards north-east of the Hospice stands a broken column, the remains of a temple, which bears the name of the *Colonne de Joux*;* it is nearly twenty feet

* Plate the fourth.

high, and three feet in diameter. It is of the variety of marble called *Cipolino*, which abounds in the upper part of a neighbouring mountain, the Cramont. The column has been surmounted by a small iron cross, placed there either as an object of worship, or to preserve this relic of a temple, of which the plan may with some difficulty be traced. Farther to the north-east, and about three hundred yards from the column, is a large circle of stones, through the midst of which the road across the mountain passes; this circle is generally called, at least by the people of the Tarentaise side of the mountain, the *Cirque d'Annibal*; and the tradition is, that Hannibal held a council of war on that spot. The muleteers who pass this road, the people of the Hospice, the guides, and the neighbouring peasantry, know it only by that name. It is formed on the highest ground of the plain, and is composed of stones of the varieties found there, principally compact gneiss and clay slate, in irregular masses, varying in weight from three hundred to six hundred pounds; they are about ten feet apart, and the circle measures nearly two hundred and fifty yards round. As it would have been easy for five hundred of Hannibal's Numidians to have formed this circle in an hour with the stones which lay scattered on the plain, it is highly probable, considering the elevation of the circle, its situation near the middle of the plain, and the facility with which it might have been formed there, that it was a spot in the camp devoted to the general, his council, or some religious observances of the Carthaginian army.

From the middle to the north-eastern extremity of the plain, a magnificent spectacle is presented by Mont Blanc, as it towers over the Cramont and range of mountains south-east of the Allée Blanche. The traveller who would enjoy one of the finest scenes in the Alps should ascend the Belveder, one of the mountains which bound the Col of the Little Saint Bernard. After an hour's easy ascent from the Hospice, which may be accomplished on a mule, an unrivalled Alpine panorama would lie before, beneath, and around him. Mont Blanc,





with its grand glaciers of the Miage and the Brenva, which appear to stream from its sides, the Great Saint Bernard, the high summits of the Cervin and Mont Rosa, the immense glacier of the Rutor extending sixteen leagues, the Mont Iseran, and a thousand intermediate peaks, would be presented in magnificent succession. A similar scene may be observed from the Valaisan, but this is more difficult of access. The mountain on the north-west of the Hospice, the Belle-face, is still more difficult to climb, and the scene from its height does not repay the trouble of attaining it, as the finest object, Mont Blanc, is concealed by the intervention of the mountain of the Bottomless Lake.

From no part of the passage of the Little Saint Bernard or the surrounding mountains can the "plains of the Po" be seen, which Polybius says Hannibal pointed out to his army to reanimate them after the fatigues of their march and ascent. This stumbling-block in the investigation of the passage of the Alps by Hannibal is removed only on the Col de Viso, whence the plains of Italy can be seen; but the utter want of agreement with Polybius in every other part, and the insurmountable difficulties which must have been presented to the Carthaginian army by the pass of the Viso, prevent any one acquainted with it from adopting the opinion that Hannibal went that way.

It is stated, however, by Polybius, in cap. 54, that Hannibal pointed out also the situation of Rome. It would have been as possible from any part of the Alps to have pointed out that of Athens. The author of the "Dissertation" thinks that the direction and bearings of the plains of the Po and Rome are all that is meant: the whole sentence thus indicates, that he pointed out the situations in which those places lay, the mountain-ridges which bounded the valleys leading to the plains of the Po, and the streams flowing from the summit in that direction, to the truth of which his guides, the Cisalpine Gauls, who accompanied him, could bear testimony. All this might have been shown to the soldiers by merely going to the

end of the little plain of the camp, and observing the deep valley of La Tuille below them.

Soon after leaving the Cirque d'Annibal, the ruins of a large building are passed, which appears to have been destroyed by fire, probably during the war of 1794. A little beyond, the plain terminates, and the scene opens in the valley of La Tuille, to which a rugged path descends as far as Pont Serrant. Before any road was made, the difficulties and dangers of this precipitous route must have been very great: here occurred the heavy losses which Hannibal sustained in the descent of his army. At Pont Serrant these must have been particularly fatal; for the river which flows from the lake of the Little Saint Bernard, rushes across the path through a frightful gorge, and falls on the right into the valley which leads to La Tuille. This gorge is about two hundred feet deep, yet so narrow that it is crossed by a wooden bridge twenty-three paces in length, of which twelve only are actually clear of the rocks at the top. In descending to La Tuille, this gulf cannot be seen until within one hundred feet of the brink, as it presents no other appearance than that of a *haw-haw* in an English pleasure-ground: it is easy to imagine how destructive such a place must have been to an army descending.

Three quarters of an hour* from Pont Serrant the traveller reaches La Tuille. A little below this village there is a spot of much importance in establishing the fact of Hannibal's passage by this route. The Doire, joined by a torrent which descends from the vast glaciers of the Mont Ruitor, forces its way through a deep ravine about a quarter of a mile below La Tuille: before arriving at this defile the river is crossed by a wooden bridge, and a safe road winds up and round the corner of a lime rock, out of which the present road has been cut: this was made, about fifty years since, to avoid the dangers of the old road, which passed on the other side of the torrent, and which was almost annually destroyed by the

* Distances are usually reckoned by time in the Alps.

avalanches which fell into this gulf from the south-eastern base of the Cramont.* It sometimes happens, that the snow accumulates in this ravine in so great a quantity, that it remains unmelted during the year; and it is stated by Polybius, cap. 55, that this unusual circumstance occurred in the season of Hannibal's passage, and that it occasioned a day's delay and great loss to his army, from the men and beasts of burden falling over this mass of snow, or sinking through it.† The distance of this gorge from the encampment on the summit, and extent of site liable to these avalanches and accumulations of snow, agree exactly with the account of Polybius. The author of this work, who had not on a former visit to the Little Saint Bernard, in 1824, seen any snow in this ravine, found a large mass there at the end of August 1826.

The road from this ravine continues high above the torrent, until it descends rapidly by a *tourniquet* and crosses the river near La Balme. Below this place the valley widens a little; but near the descent to the baths of St. Didier the stream sinks into a deep abyss, and forces its way, almost in darkness, through a tremendous rift in the mountain, whence it escapes into the Val d'Aosta. The road on the left bank leaves the river so far beneath, that its struggles are only *heard*. Fearful accidents have happened here, though the road is good and there is no appearance of danger: several crosses, the chronicles of death, are near, to solicit prayers for the repose of the souls of the unfortunate, whose humble memorials are their initials, and the dates of the accidents, preceded by P I, or, as it is sometimes carved on the cross, *Périt ici*.

Few scenes in the Alps are more magnificent than the range of Mont Blanc, seen from this descent to Pré St. Didier; but

* Title vignette.

† It is important to notice the statement of Polybius, that "the beasts of burden also, when they endeavoured to rise from their fall, broke through the surface of the snow, and remained there with their loads, as it were wedged in." This could only have happened in a situation where, as in this ravine, the water had sub-melted the snow as it passed beneath; for as the feet found no support, the beasts could not extricate themselves.

the finest *effect* under which the author ever saw it was by moonlight. Nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the "Monarch of Mountains," and his vast attendant masses, seen under her illumination: the snow, in shadow, was so near the colour of the sky, that its form could not be distinguished; whilst the part which was lit by the moon was sharply seen against the dark sky, of an indescribably pale whiteness, apparently suspended in air; for below the snow, the mountains could not be perceived in the haze and darkness.

There are warm springs at Pré St. Didier; the baths are frequented by the Piedmontese during the season: the visitors are neither so numerous nor so respectable as those who establish themselves for the summer at the mineral springs of Courmayeur, a town about a league distant, at the head of the Val d'Aosta. From the baths, Mont Blanc and the range of the Alps which closes the head of the Val d'Aosta form one of the finest scenes illustrative of this pass.* The river which descends from the Little Saint Bernard gushes from the deep ravine at the base of the Mont des Bains, and soon after falls into the great mass of water, which, flowing from its source in the Lac de Combai, and having collected tribute from all the eastern glaciers of Mont Blanc, pursues its way through the Val d'Aosta to join the Po in the plains of Italy. It is accompanied by a carriage-road through the valley, from Courmayeur to Ivrea in the plain.

A good road from Pré St. Didier joins that of the Val d'Aosta, after crossing the Doire by an excellent bridge. Thence a rapid descent for a league conducts the traveller through the town of Morges, and an hour lower in the valley, to the town of La Salle. This part of the valley abounds with fine scenes, and the picturesque is greatly aided by the grand and massive forms of the chestnut-trees, whether seen as proximate objects, or in distant forests on the sides of the mountains.

Below La Salle the valley closes into a deep defile, and the

* Plate the fifth.



road cut out of the rock is carried high on the right bank by Fort Roc, a place admirably adapted for the defence of the passage: deep chasms are left covered only by platforms, which may be readily removed, and the road thus rendered impassable: at present, strong railings or walls defend the traveller from the danger of falling over the precipices into the gulf below. The scenes in this part of the valley are very wild and grand, particularly on looking up the deep ravine to where Mont Blanc closes the scene with a magnificent back-ground.*

From Fort Roc the road rapidly descends to Ivrogne, beyond which the valley widens; the road continues through it to Villeneuve, and at a distance of about twenty miles from Pré Saint Didier the traveller enters the city of Aosta.

It will appear extraordinary to any person travelling by this route, particularly if he be acquainted with the great roads made by Napoleon over the Simplon and Cenis, that this pass should have been allowed to remain a mule-road from Bourg Saint Maurice to Pré Saint Didier. The Col of the Little Saint Bernard is not much higher than that of either of the great passes mentioned, whilst the facilities offered by this route to the engineer and the traveller are considerably greater than those found on either of Buonaparte's roads into Italy. It is said that Napoleon had directed surveys of the Little Saint Bernard to be made, with the intention of constructing a great road across it. In the time of the Romans it was made a carriage-road by Augustus; and though few vestiges of the old road remain, yet the ease with which it might be reconstructed may be inferred from the facts, that a column of 6000 Austrians crossed it with ten pieces of cannon in 1815, and the author of this work in 1824 had a light cabriolet taken over it without dismounting.†

It is said to be the policy of the government of Sardinia to neglect all roads which do not, after crossing the Alps, neces-

* Plate the sixth.

† Saussure says, speaking of the Little Saint Bernard, "Ce passage des Alps est un des plus facile que je connoisse."

sarily lead to Turin. The objection does not apply to this, which conducts directly to the capital by the Val d'Aosta; and as both sides of the Little Saint Bernard are within the territory governed by Sardinia, the subjects of this state, in the event of the pass being opened by a good road, would be the people chiefly benefited: there are already excellent roads from Chamberry to St. Maurice, and from Courmayeur to Turin. A diligence goes regularly from Chamberry to Moutiers, and every variety of carriage may be found in the Val d'Aosta.

The summit of this mountain and its approaches are free from all dangers of avalanches; and the unrivalled beauties of the valleys of the Isere and Aosta would induce many travellers to enter Italy by this route, which is as short as any other, if there were a carriage-road across the mountain. But in whatever state the road may remain, the beauty and the interest of the pass, particularly considered as the route of Hannibal, will induce many to examine it, and the examination cannot fail to be highly interesting. Besides the concurrence with the ancient itineraries, other evidence of the agreement of this route with the account of Polybius (the only early author upon this subject that can be trusted), will be found during its course, and traditions in aid of these extend along the whole line of march.

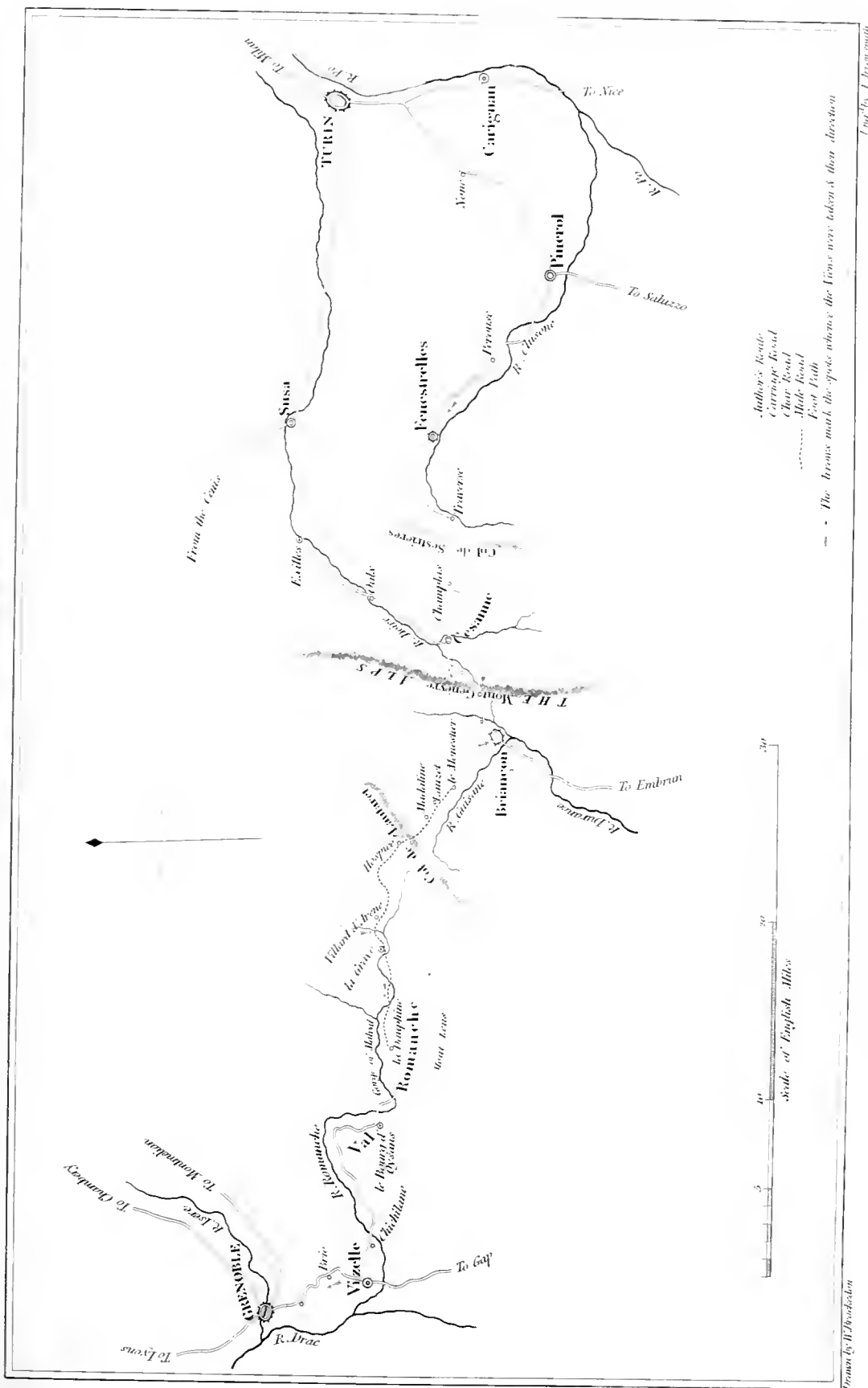
In a work like this, intended to be descriptive rather than historical, it is impossible, from the limit proposed to the text, to enter into a defence of the opinion which the author feels himself entitled to hold, that the passage of Hannibal was by the Little Saint Bernard. He has read every work upon the subject to which he could get access, and traversed the Alps by twenty-four different passes into Italy: these passes include every route by which the various theorists have led the Carthaginian army, and all by which it was possible for that army to have crossed the Alps; and these researches and examinations have induced the conviction, that the Pass of the Little Saint Bernard alone is that by which, according to the account of Polybius, Hannibal led his army into Italy.







STATUS OF THE ACT



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FROM TURIN TO GRENOBLE BY THE MONT GENÈVE RAIL

ROUTE

FROM

TURIN TO GRENOBLE

BY THE

PASS OF THE MONT GENÈVRE.

THERE are two roads which lead from Turin to the pass of the Mont Genève; one by Susa and the pass of Exilles, the other by the Val Pragelas and the Col de Sestrière. By either of these roads the traveller may arrive at Cesanne, a frontier village of Piedmont, at the foot of the Mont Genève, whence he is led, by the pass of this mountain, into Dauphiny.

The approach to the Val Pragelas, or valley of the Clusone, which lies south by west of Turin, is by Noné and Pignerol, through the fertile plains of the Po, and over an excellent but uninteresting road. Pignerol is a town which has frequently been the scene of contests between the respective sovereigns of France and Piedmont. In 1630 it was taken by the army of Louis XIII., which was commanded by Cardinal Richelieu in person: it continued attached to the crown of France for many years; but was restored by treaty to Victor Amadeus II. after its fortifications had been destroyed.* The situation of

* Pignerol will also be remembered as the scene of the early imprisonment of the *Man with the Iron Mask*, whose fate is so well known. Recent investigations make it appear that he was one Mathioli, a Bolognese, who was secretary of state to the Duke of Mantua. In utter violation of the law of nations, he was entrapped and imprisoned for life, to satisfy the reckless vengeance of Louis XIV.

Pignerol was very important, as it masqued the *débouché* or several valleys which descend from the Alps : some of these valleys were defended on the frontiers by forts, so situated that the strength of their natural positions gave them great military advantages; many of them are now destroyed, but the Val Pragelas is still guarded by the Fort of Fenestrelles.

The entrance to the Val Pragelas,* at a short distance from Pignerol, is very beautiful; soon, however, the plains of Piedmont, towards the south, bounded by the Maritime Alps and Monte Viso, are shut out, by the lower ranges of the hills, from the view of the traveller, as he ascends by a road on the left bank of the river Clusone, which flows through the Val Pragelas: this road has been much neglected. During the time that the States of Sardinia were departments of France, Napoleon ordered a road of the first class to be constructed through this valley, which should communicate with the Mont Genève by the Col de Sestrière; but, since the restoration of Piedmont to the King of Sardinia, even what had been accomplished has been entirely neglected, and in a few years the road will become impassable for any sort of carriage. By keeping the other road from Cessane, through Susa, to Turin, in better travelling condition, the government of Sardinia induces travellers from the Mont Genève to pass that way and visit Turin, which might have been avoided by the Val Pragelas, and the journey to Genoa and southern Italy made much shorter.

The Val Pragelas is, in some places, very confined; huge rocks overhang the road, which shares a narrow way with the bed of the Clusone, as this river struggles through the gorges of the valley to join the Po in the plains.

The river Clusone is one of the boundaries of the

* At a short distance from the entrance there are quarries of gneiss worked, where the stones are obtained and prepared with which they are constructing a new bridge across the Po, at Turin.



Vandois,* or Protestant communities of Piedmont: on its left bank are two of their churches, St. Germain's and Pomaret, which is at the entrance of the Valley of St. Martin, opposite Pêrouse.

The first appearance of the Fort of Fenestrelles is very striking: its white lines and parapets skirt the ridge of the mountain, and descend into the valley in an almost unbroken series of defences, commanding and impregnable. The fort,† as the traveller approaches it, is very fine, though much of its extent is concealed, on the Italian side, by the rocks that overhang a road which has been cut out of the side of the mountain, and which leads, by a defile immediately beneath the fort, to the village of Fenestrelles.

The fort, from the French side of the defile, has an appearance of prodigious strength. At present it is employed as a state prison, where Carbonari, who have struggled for liberty, and priests who have been guilty of great crimes, are confined together; the former for security, the latter for protection against public vengeance.‡ Above Fenestrelles the valley again expands; the road ascends rapidly, and winds along the brink of a precipice nearly two miles: deep pits, which are never filled up, and large stones, allowed to remain in the road unless removed by the peasants when their chars cannot otherwise pass, render this part of the route, which was nearly completed by Napoleon, and was once in excellent condition, almost impassable.

Soon after leaving Traverse, the road winds up to the Col de Sestrière: the plain of the Col is about two miles long,

* They will be particularly noticed in the Pass of the Col de Croix.

† First Plate.

‡ The horrible outrage and murder committed by Mingrat, the curé of St. Quentin's, in Dauphiny, is still fresh in the memory of all who have heard the tale: he fled from justice into Savoy, and was placed by the Sardinian government, for *protection*, in the Fort of Fenestrelles. He was condemned to death in France, but escaped into the States of Sardinia, where the clergy never suffer publicly for their crimes.

and rich in mountain pasturage: on it are numerous chalets, where butter and cheese are prepared during the summer: the scene from the Col is very fine. The descent to Cesaune from the village of Champlas is over a part of the road which was admirably constructed, but the Sardinian government has suffered it to fall into decay.

Cesaune is situated at the eastern base of the Mont Genève, and is distant from Susa about twenty-two miles: a tolerable road leads to this place by the valley of the Doira-Susana through Oulx, Salbertrand, and Exilles. The greater facilities of communication with the pass of the Mont Genève, by way of Susa, from Turin, induced the sovereigns of Piedmont to aid the natural defences of the road by strong fortifications, which guard the valley at the base of the Col d'Asiette, near Exilles: this spot has been rendered memorable by the fate of the Comte de Belle-isle, who fell here on the 19th of July, 1747: his desperate valour, which had been excited by the promise of a *bâton de maréchal* of France, if he succeeded in forcing the pass, was checked, after he had received many severe wounds, by a *coup de grace* from a grenadier of the regiment of Montserrat.

At Cesaune the accommodations are wretched; but the kindness and civility offered at an inn kept by Rigat* will compensate for the want of some comforts. The poor host complained bitterly of his suffering from the change of government: under the French, the entire taxation to which he was liable was fifty francs: the Sardinian government now extorts from him two hundred for his house, and one hundred for his goods.

From Cesaune a fine road leads, in two hours, to the plain on the Mont Genève, by what is termed Le Tourniquet, which winds up the steep side of the mountain, whence the scene of

* The inns upon this road are not distinguished by signs, but by the name of the host, as *chez Rigat*.



the Col de Sestrière across the valley, and the deep road beneath, are striking.* In some parts of the road, where the slope is considerable and the soil soft, the way is rendered secure by pine-trees, which are driven in, or placed horizontally, and at right angles with the road; these are firmly propped and wedged with stones and earth, and their outer extremity is guarded by a strong railing.

The Col of the Mont Genève is a plain of nearly two miles in length, and is the lowest of all the passes across the Alps, its height being 5850 feet above the level of the Mediterranean: if the only obstacle this way had been the ridge of the Mont Genève, there can be little doubt that this would have been the great line of intercourse between France and Italy; but the secondary Alpine ranges of the Sestrière in Piedmont, and the Lautaret in France, are difficulties in the way of its becoming a great line of communication, unless a second Napoleon should arise to realise the splendid and liberal contemplations of the first. The summit of the passage is much sheltered by the higher mountains which bound it, and has a direction nearly east and west; it is cultivated even at the greatest elevation of the pass, and barley is grown there; the surrounding valleys are also fertile: it is probable that these advantages induced the Gauls to prefer this route in their descents into Italy. Tradition reports that they emigrated under Bellovesus by this pass, during the reign of Tarquin the Elder. These Gauls were from Gallia Celtica, which comprehended all the country between the Seine, the Garonne, and these Alps; they drove out the ancient possessors of Piedmont, and established themselves in the extensive tract known to the Romans as Gallia Cisalpina.

The earliest account we have of the acquaintance of the Romans with this route is given by Cæsar, who, when he crossed the Alps to check a formidable inroad of the Helvetii into Gaul, appears to have passed the Mont Genève with at

* Second Plate.

least a part of his army;* but the account given by him is so obscure, that nothing conclusive can be said upon it. The profound researches, however, of D'Anville have thrown some light upon the subject, and shown that Cæsar's approach to the Mont Genève was by the Val Pragelas, and the Col de Sestrière; as the passage by Exilles lay through the heart of the territory of an active enemy, Domus, whose capital was Susa. Augustus conciliated this Alpine chieftain with the title of king, and made his son Cottius a prefect, with the guardianship of these Alps, to which his name was given.

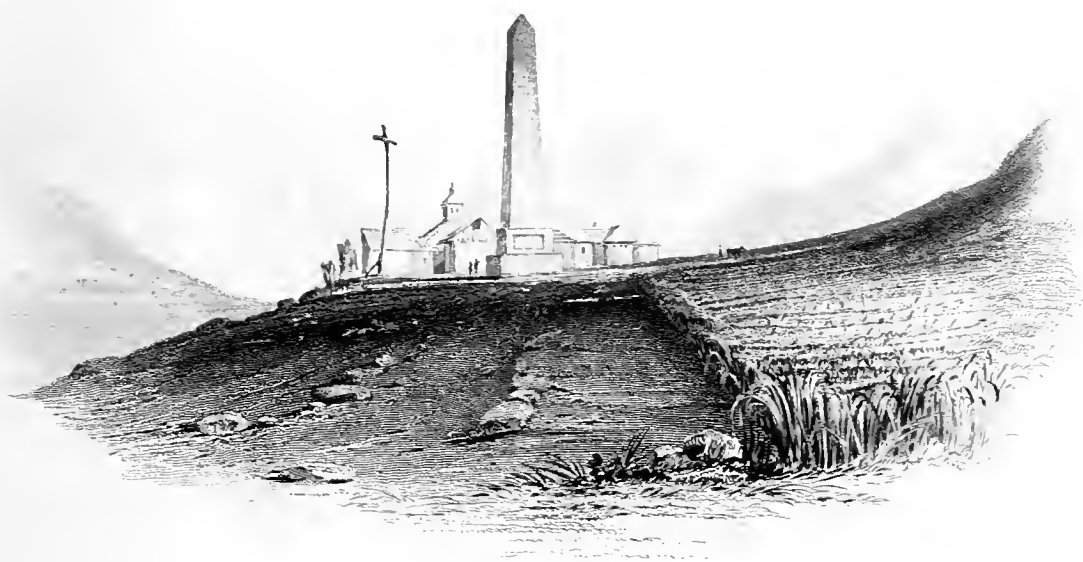
The Cottian Alps lie between the Mont Iseran and the Monte Viso. An inscription upon a triumphal arch at Susa, raised by Cottius in honour of Augustus, furnishes some interesting historical information. Vestiges of Roman works may be traced on the pass of the Mont Genève: Cottius exerted himself to render the road practicable, and the troops of Agrippa were also employed upon it.†

At the Bourg Mont Genève, a village on the plain of the mountain, columns, inscriptions, &c., of Roman origin, have been found. The archives of this place were burnt when Victor Amadeus descended, in 1708, by this pass, to Briançon and the Embrunnais. There is no part of the frontier of France so immediately in contact, and having equal facility of intercourse with Piedmont, as this part of Dauphiny; and the important pass of the Mont Genève‡ is, therefore, associated with many of the great military events which arose from the

* The main body, it is believed, passed the great chain by the Mons Rudus (*Col du Rue*), from the Valley of Oulx to Modanne, in the Maurienne.

† A part of the army of Charlemagne, in his descent into Italy, appears to have entered by the Mont Genève; but the account which leads to this opinion is very unsatisfactory.

‡ In a curious old memoir of the journey of the Prince of Condé into Italy, published in Paris, 1686, mention is made of his passage of the Mont Genève. "Le Mardy dix-huictième (d'Octobre) disner à Ours, passe le Mont Genève à la ramasse [*i.e.* in a sort of sledge], ven Essilles après disner fort chasteau: quitte la France, entre dans le Piedmont, à une petite croix, proche l'assise village, la faut montrer le certificat de la santé, coucher à Susa, première ville du Piedmont." It is difficult to understand the situation of Ours mentioned in this quotation, unless the prince descended by the Col d'Ours to the valley of Exilles: the passage is obscure.



Drawn by W. H. Sturges

Engraved by J. H. Sturges

THE LITTLE ANCHOR LIGHT

contests of France and Piedmont, from the war of 1580, when Charles Emmanuel invaded the Marquisate of Saluces, and gained an Alpine frontier to his capital, Turin, down to the wars of the Pragmatic Sanction, the Revolution, and the events of 1814.*

The road across the Mont Genève was only a mule-path prior to 1802, when the communes of the Briançonnais, assisted by the soldiers of the garrison of Briançon, at the call of the sub-prefect, began the construction of the present magnificent road, thirty feet wide, across the mountain, from Briançon to Cesanne, about eight miles: it was opened on the 12th of April, 1804; and all that portion which is within the present French territory is still in excellent preservation. To commemorate the opening of this road, which the government named *La Route d'Espagne en Italie*, an obelisk, sixty-five feet high, was raised, in 1807, on the highest part of the passage, on the line of demarcation between France and Piedmont:† it is simple in form, and built of limestones of large dimensions. The following inscriptions were composed by the Institute, and placed on the obelisk, as recorded by Ladoucette:‡

NEAPOLEONI · IMP · AUG.
ITALORUM · REGI,
QUOD · GALLIIS · VIRTUTE · SUA · RESTITUTIS
EARUMQ · FINIBUS · PROPAGATIS,
UT · IMPERI · ACCESSUM
VIATORIBUS · LATIOREM
COMMERCIIS · FACILIOREM · REDDERET,
VIAM · PER · MONTES · TRICORIORUM
ET · ALPES · COTTIAS
APERUERIT · MUNIVERIT · STRAVERIT,
ORDO · ET · POPULUS
PROVINCE · ALPINÆ · SUPERIORIS
PROVIDENTISSIMO · PRINCIPI.

A. MDCCCVII. CURANTE J. C. F. LADOUCETTE PRÆFECTO.

* See "Memoirs of the Duke of Berwick;" "Guerre des Alpes, ou Campagne de 1744, par le Marquis de St. Simon;" "Histoire Militaire du Piedmont, par le Comte Alexandre de Saluces;" and the "Histoire Militaire des Français—Guerres d'Italie, Campagne des Alpes."

† Vignette at the end.

‡ "Histoire, Antiquités, etc. des Alpes, par un ancien Préfet."

On the opposite face of the obelisk was the following inscription:—

NAPOLÉON LE GRAND,
EMPEREUR ET ROI,
RESTAURATEUR DE LA FRANCE,
A FAIT OUVRIR CETTE ROUTE,
AU TRAVERS DU MONT GENÈVRE,
PENDANT QU'IL TRIOMPHAIT DE SES ENNEMIS
SUR LA VISTULE ET SUR L'ODER.

J. C. F. LADOUCKETTE, PRÉFET,
ET LE CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL DU DÉPARTEMENT,
ONT CONSACRÉ CE TÉMOIGNAGE
DE LEUR RECONNAISSANCE.
1807.

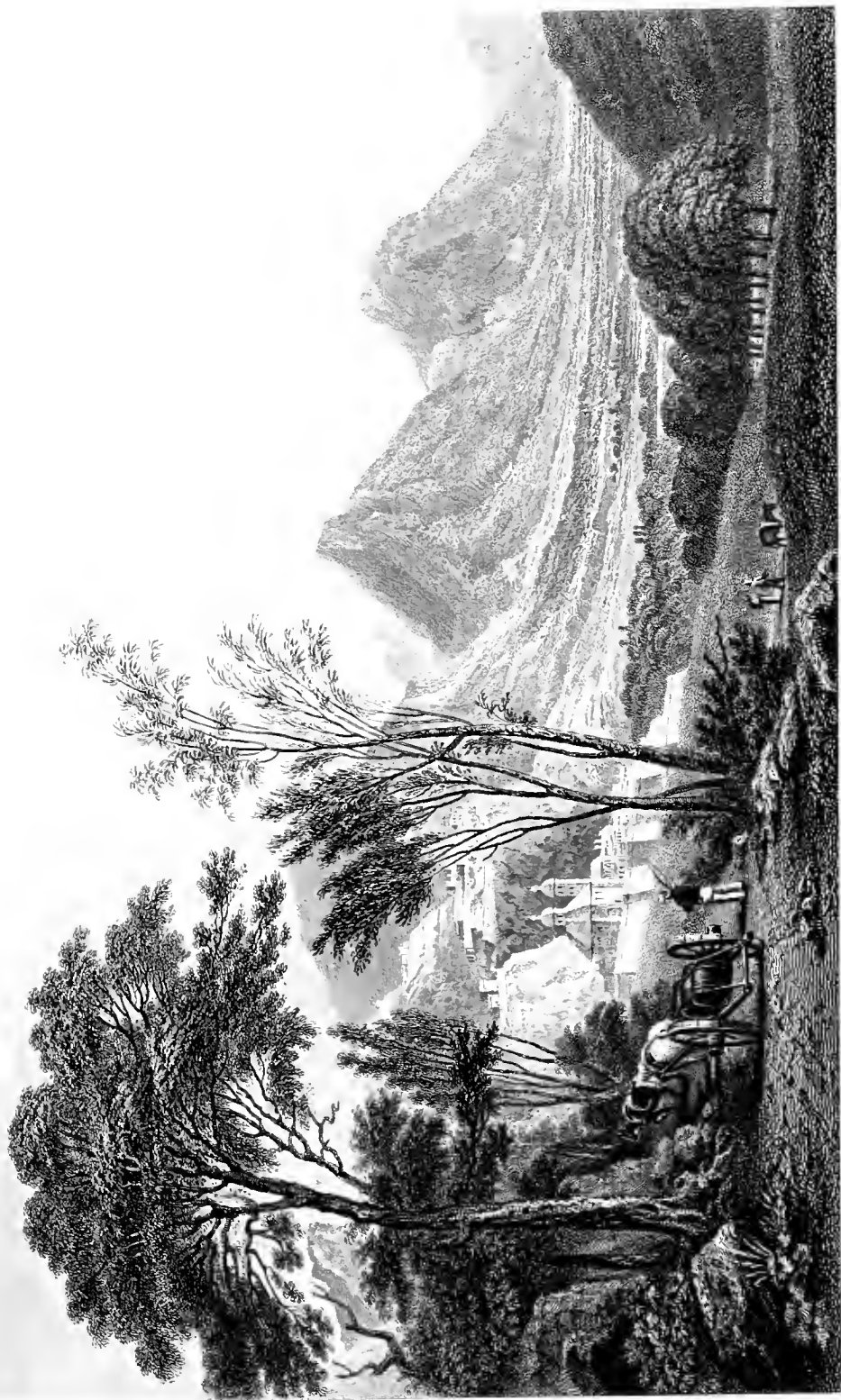
A translation, in Spanish and Italian, of the Latin inscription, was placed on the two other faces of the obelisk.

A grand fête was given on the plain of the mountain, when the inauguration of the obelisk was celebrated; upon which occasion the prefect of the department caused a medal to be struck, in commemoration of the event.

In 1815 an Austro-Sardinian army, which entered France by this route, allowed the obelisk to remain, but dug out the tablets, and destroyed the inscriptions, which had been executed at Turin upon slabs of black marble of Como; each tablet a single piece of great weight. The same spirit which prompted the destruction of the tablets, led to the removal of Napoleon's name from a fountain on the road, lest some thirsty traveller should bless his memory.

Near the obelisk, and springing almost from a common source, the rivers Doira-Susana and Durance take their rise; the former flowing into the Po and Adriatic, the latter into the Rhône and Mediterranean.

In 1340, Humbert II., Prince of Briançon, founded hospitals, or places of refuge, on the Mont Genève, and some other situations in the high Alps, for the protection of travellers; that on the Mont Genève was in the midst of the



Drawn by W. D. Wood

Bourg, but it had fallen to ruin, and, in 1807, the French government determined to establish another; from some unexplained causes, however, it has hitherto been delayed; yet the following inscription for it was prepared by the Institute:—

NEAPOLEONIS · AUG · PROVIDENTIA
HOSPITIO · GENEVRENSI
CONDITO
CARITATIS · ERGA · PEREGRINANTES
OFFICIA · TRAPENSIBUS · EXERCENDA
RESTITUIT
ANNO MDCCCVII.

Soon after leaving the Bourg Mont Genève, the road descends by a grand tourniquet; and, deep and distant in the valley, Briançon opens to the view of the traveller, with its numerous forts, in a magnificent landscape surrounded by lofty mountains. The fine road by which the town is approached, on the right bank of the Durance, is cut out of the rock that overhangs the deep ravine of the river, across which a bridge of a single arch is thrown, of great height, and one hundred and twenty feet span: by this the town communicates with the forts, which rise above each other on the left of the Durance, to the *Redoute de l'Infernet*, on the summit of a mountain. The whole presents a series of defences equal to the local, and surpassing the military, strength of the Fenestrelles.

Briançon is a place of great antiquity, mentioned by Strabo, Ptolemy, and Pliny, the last of whom rather strangely attributes its foundation to some *Greeks* who were chased from the borders of the Lake of Como; but, however obscure the origin of Briançon may be, the bas-reliefs and medals of the emperors found there attest its early importance. Unfortunately, this place was burnt in the savage irruption of the Piedmontese, under Victor Amadens, in 1692, when its archives were destroyed, and with them the civil and military history of the Cottian Alps.

From Briançon, the *Route d'Espagne en Italie* descends,

by the Durance, to Embrun and Gap; but a shorter road to Grenoble, by forty-five miles, lies through the valleys of the Guisanne and the Romanche: it is at present only practicable for mules. This road was known to the Romans; some vestiges of their works remain, and their stations upon the route have been traced by D'Anville.

From the entrance to the valley of the Guisanne,* the view of the town and forts of Briançon, in the rich valley of the Durance, which spreads out below the town, studded with woods and villages, and bounded by lofty mountains, is very beautiful: the valley of the Durance disappears as that of the Guisanne is ascended, but the forts of Briançon continue in sight even to Monestier, where they seem to be backed by the lofty range of the Alps, of which Monte Viso is a grand feature, as it rises high above Briançon, and closes the scene. The valley of the Guisanne is well cultivated and productive; it abounds with villages, of which St. Chaffrey and La Salle are the principal. About six miles from Briançon is Monestier, the ancient Stabadio; its hot and mineral springs are not much frequented; the temperature of the water is 108° of Fahrenheit. Above Monestier the valley becomes sterile. The next village, Le Casset, is near the foot of the Glacier de Lasciale, which descends from the Mont d'Arcines: here the larch is stunted in its growth, yet a little barley is cultivated; and, where the poor but industrious peasant can irrigate, a rank grass springs up, which is carefully cut and stored for the winter, as food and fodder for the cattle; a prudent economy where the snow lies in the valley usually eight months in the year. Even in the higher and more sterile part of the valley, where any larger vegetation than that of the rhododendron has ceased, there are villages to be found.† At the

* Third Plate.

† At one of these, La Lauzet, the author stopped for refreshment: roast and boiled mutton, bread, butter, cheese, eggs, milk, and wine, were placed before him; he, his guide, and mule, were abundantly fed for thirteen sous,—sevenpence halfpenny.



last hamlet of the valley, La Madelaine, a small hospice is established, and some custom-house officers are placed there to guard the smugglers' paths, which lead from this part of the valley into Piedmont. Soon after leaving this village, the ascent of the Lautaret becomes very rapid, and the savage sterility of the surrounding scene is very fine and impressive.* Across a deep ravine, the river Guisanne is seen tumbling down the mountains from its source in the distant glacier of Mont d'Arcines, and thence flowing on to the Durance, through the narrow valley which is bounded by rugged and pinnacled mountains.

The Col de Lautaret, distant about fourteen miles from Briançon, is remarkable as a barrier between high ranges of mountains blocking up and separating the valleys of the Guisanne and the Romanche: it is nearly five hundred feet higher than the Mont Genève, and has no plain on its summit, the greatest extent of level ground being not more than fifty yards: the crest of the passage is covered with a delicious green sward, which is enamelled with rare and beautiful Alpine flowers,—a land of Goshen amidst the scene which storms and avalanches have desolated.† On the Col de Lautaret there yet remains one of the *maisons hospitalières*, founded by Humbert II.,‡ which was undergoing repair when the author passed the mountains.

The scenes from the descent towards the Val Romanche are scarcely less savage than those on the side of the Guisanne; the immense glacier of Tabuchet, from which the river Romanche issues, presents itself on the left; after an hour's descent, the road continues by the course of the river through the valley. A little beyond the village of Villard d'Arène, the traveller descends abruptly to a part of the road

* Fourth Plate.

† Ladoucette says, "La montagne pastorale du Lautaret est la plus belle des Hautes-Alpes."

‡ See page 8.

where the vast overhanging rocks close in, apparently, without leaving a sufficient opening for the escape of the waters of the river Romanche, which fall into a deep and dark defile:* the path lies beneath rocks which threaten to overwhelm the traveller; and the effect of the scene and situation upon his feelings as he passes opposite the cataract cannot be described. Thence the road ascends to a fearful height above the river, which is heard to roar below, keeping the mind alive to a sense of danger, until the scene opens upon the little territory of La Grave, which is magnificent. Mont Lens is seen in front, its sides covered with glaciers, and its base sinking deep into the gorge, where vast protruding masses intersect each other, and give only a slight and occasional glimpse of the foaming river which forces its way among them.† After descending by a narrow path, and passing under an enormous mass of slate rock, the village of La Grave is seen at a little distance on a hill. *Chez Boi*, the only inn, offers wretched accommodation for sleeping, but the wine and refreshments are excellent.‡ At La Grave the weather is so severe in winter, that in the event of a death in the village at that season, the inhabitants cannot make a grave during the frost, but suspend the corpse in a granary, or place it on the roof of a house, until the returning spring.

From La Grave the road descends to the Combe of Malval, and is continued through a deep ravine along the course of the river; the road is difficult and rugged; rocks of enormous size, which have fallen from above, strew the valley, whose steep sides are formed by the *débris* of the mountains which rise from it perpendicularly, covered with

* Title vignette.

† The author made the passage from Villard d'Arène to La Grave by moonlight, which greatly increased the depth and effect of the shadows.

‡ At least they were in 1824; but when the author repassed the Val Romanche, in 1828, he could not procure *chez Boi* even good bread. The baker had not ascended the valley that day; and no other bread was to be had than that which the peasants use, which is so hard, that a hatchet always lies on the table to cut it into morsels.



glaciers; some of these overhang the valley, and torrents stream from them a thousand feet down the precipices, to swell the Romanche. Near La Dauphine, a fine cataract, called La Pucelle, pours itself into the valley, apparently from the summit of the mountain, and adds a feature of beauty to the scene, whilst its wildness is increased by the stone huts or chalets reared by the herdsmen against the sheltered sides of the immense blocks which have rolled into the valley.*

Not far below La Dauphine, the traveller arrives at a gallery cut through a rock, close to the river, the last finished portion of a great road which Napoleon had ordered to be constructed through these wild and secluded valleys, from Grenoble to Briançon: the gallery is about eighty paces long, and its situation bears some resemblance to that of Iselle on the route of the Simplon. The road thence continues along the left bank of the river; the sides of the hills are well wooded; chestnut and walnut trees abound, and the little church of Freney, half-way up the hill on the right bank, peeping out from among the trees, and farms, and cottages, with which the hills are now speckled, forcibly contrast this delightful spot with the savage descent to it, and brings the traveller again to society and its associations. But a little below Freney, the scene again changes, the gorge of Malval commences, and the road, which cannot be led through the dark defile, rises high on the mountain side, and is carried through a hard schistose rock, which has been excavated two hundred and forty long paces; this length exceeds that of the great gallery of Gondo, in the Simplon, by nearly two hundred feet: there are three lateral openings through the rock, to light the passage, and the look-out from these upon the dark abyss, through which the Romanche foams its way at the depth of five hundred feet, is appalling; after leaving

* Fifth Plate.

the great gallery, the road still rises, and the traveller finds himself hundreds of feet above and below precipices. The road shortly after turns off on the left through Mondelent, a romantic village, the name of which is evidently derived from Mont Lens; it is situate at the base of this mountain, on the site of the ancient Mellosedum; thence, descending by a portion of the new road never finished, and now, from neglect, difficult to pass, the traveller again reaches the bed of the Romanche, near its confluence with the river Vençon; after pursuing its course for half a mile, it is crossed on a wooden bridge, and another hour brings the traveller to Bourg d'Oysans (Catorissium). The plain of Bourg d'Oysans is surrounded by high and rugged mountains, and bears strong evidence of having formerly, and at no very distant period, been a lake; this was formed in the 11th century by the *débris* of the mountains brought down by torrents, and forming an embankment in the Combe de Gavet, near the entrance of the plain of Bourg d'Oysans. The plain was covered for two centuries by the waters of the lake, to the depth of from 60 to 80 feet; but in September 1229, the embankment was forced by the pressure of the water, which rushed through the valleys of the Romanche, the Drac, and the Isere, and destroyed all the villages in its way;—it submerged, for a time, even part of the city of Grenoble, and was extensively destructive of lives and property.

In the scenery around Bourg d'Oysans, the grandest feature is Mont Lens, over a part of which the old Roman road passed, of which many traces may be distinctly seen; but it must at all times have been a passage of considerable difficulty, as it rises one thousand feet higher than any part of the road by the Gorge of Malval. The grand undertaking of opening a road from Grenoble to Briançon by the Col de Lautaret, was decreed by Buonaparte on the 17th Feb. 1804, and is one of the numerous and important services which he rendered to France, without the prospect of employing it for



military purposes : the entire length of the proposed route from Grenoble to Briançon is about fifty miles.

Below Bourg d'Oysans, for about two leagues, the valley is highly cultivated, and its produce is considerable : but from the point at which there is a turn in the valley, to Chichilâne, it narrows again to a glen, which has much beauty in its character ; it is richly wooded, and the industry of the inhabitants has been employed upon every spot where a small return for labour could be sought : many waterfalls are passed, which at an early hour are finely tinted with irises, whose bows spread their beautiful hues over the falls, with varying intensity, as the currents of air affect the mists which rise from the cataracts. This part of the valley is called the Combe of Gavet, from a village of that name which is situated half-way between Bourg d'Oysans and Vizille. At a little distance from Chichilâne, the road turns off to the right, leaving the river to sweep round the plain or basin of Vizille, to join the river Drac, below that town. Vizille is beautifully situated in a rich plain, surrounded by lofty mountains, on the highroad to Gap from Grenoble, and is a place of some importance in the province : its political character is likely to be long remembered. It was considered the cradle of the French Revolution, as the declaration of the parliament of Dauphiny, which sat at Vizille, was the fatal blow to the monarchical power in France.

From Vizille to Grenoble, a distance of about ten miles, the road is hilly, but very picturesque. Grenoble is first seen from below the village of Brie ; and the landscape, with the city peeping from the distant valley, presents an interesting *coup d'œil*.* The road thence continues through avenues of fine trees, nearly the whole way to the capital of Dauphiny.

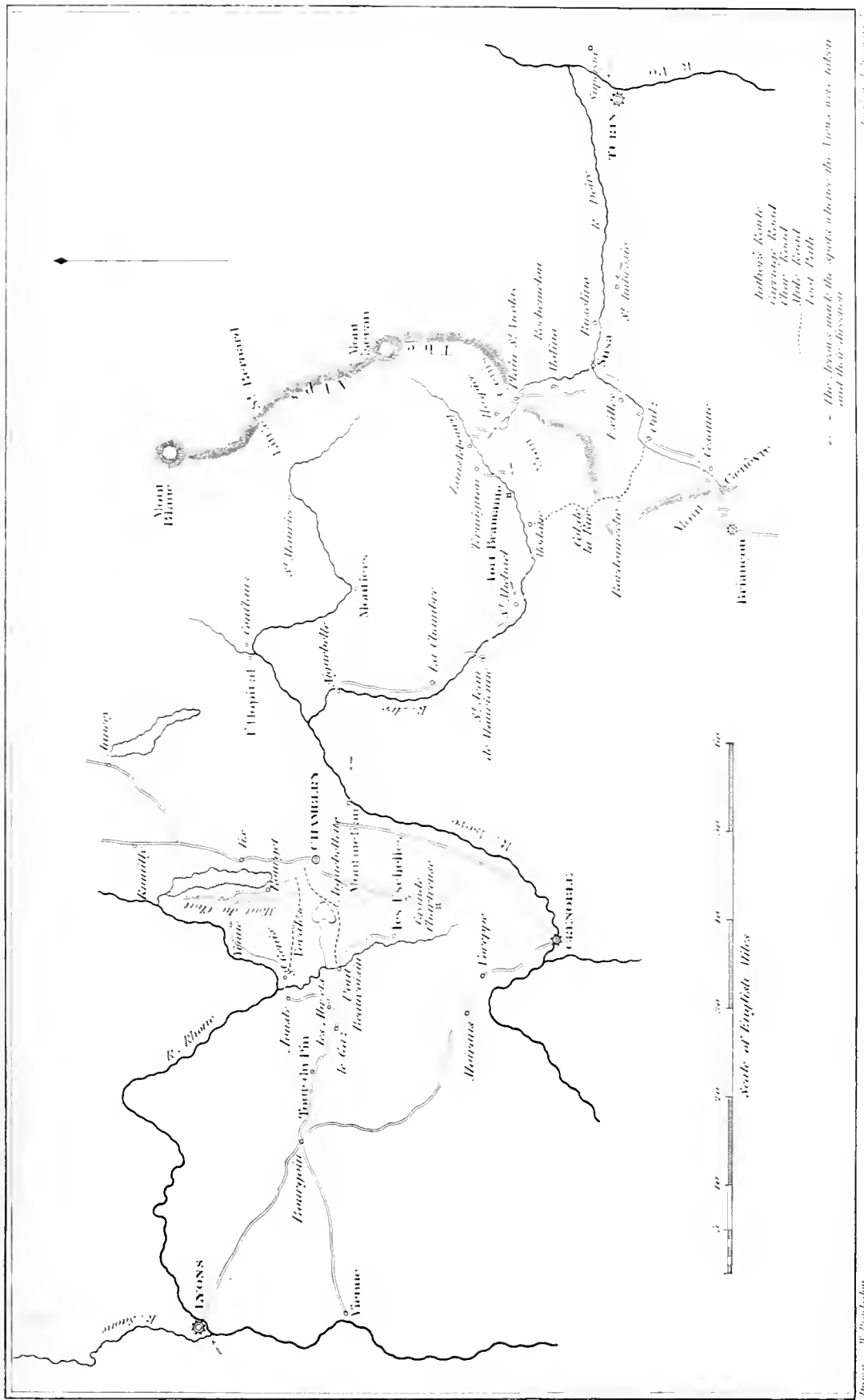
To the traveller who desires to go by the Genève from Grenoble, or from Grenoble to Briançon, the author re-

* Sixth Plate.

commends the route by the Val Romanche, if the enjoyment of wild and magnificent scenery be the object of his journey : this recommendation is given the more confidently, as the author is also acquainted with the road to Briançon by Gap and Embrun. A diligence leaves Grenoble by the latter road three times a-week, and luggage can be sent by it to Briançon to meet the traveller who may choose to walk, or go on horseback, through the Val Romanche. A light carriage can be hired at Grenoble to go as far as Bourg d'Oysans, whence horses and guides may be taken on to Briançon ; at Bourg d'Oysans, Revel's is a tolerable inn ; and at Monestier the traveller can be well accommodated. Refreshment may be had at very moderate charges in almost every village ; the inhabitants are civil and obliging, and the beautiful and magnificent scenery of the route is scarcely rivalled by any passage in Switzerland.



STATE OF THE ARTS



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FROM LYONS TO TRIA BY THE MOUV' CLYALS.

Donnerstag 17. April 1906

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ROUTE

FROM

LYONS TO TURIN,

BY

THE PASS OF THE MONT CENIS.

THE route by the Mont Cenis might be considered as properly commencing at the conjunction of the rivers Arc and Isere : but as the range of mountains which extends south of the Jura, from the Rhone to the Isere, presents a formidable barrier between France and Savoy, which formerly rendered access to Chamberry, from Lyons, very difficult, the author has chosen to commence his illustrations of the Pass of the Cenis at Lyons, and complete them at Turin.

Lyons is seated between the Rhone and the Saone, near the confluence of these rivers, and, probably, owes to its situation its commercial celebrity : it lies in the direct route to the Cenis from Paris,* and its environs exhibit some of the most beautiful scenery in France. From the church of St. Mary Fourvières, which overlooks the city, the vast plains watered by the Rhone and the Ain are seen extending to the Jura, and to the snowy ranges of the Savoy mountains ; and in clear weather, even beyond and above these, Mont Blanc can be seen, appearing to be rather an object of the sky than of the earth, hovering like a mighty spirit.†

* The traveller who wishes to go by the most interesting route to Lyons is recommended to go from Paris by Dijon, the Côte d'Or, Chalons sur Saone, and thence to Lyons by the coche d'au.

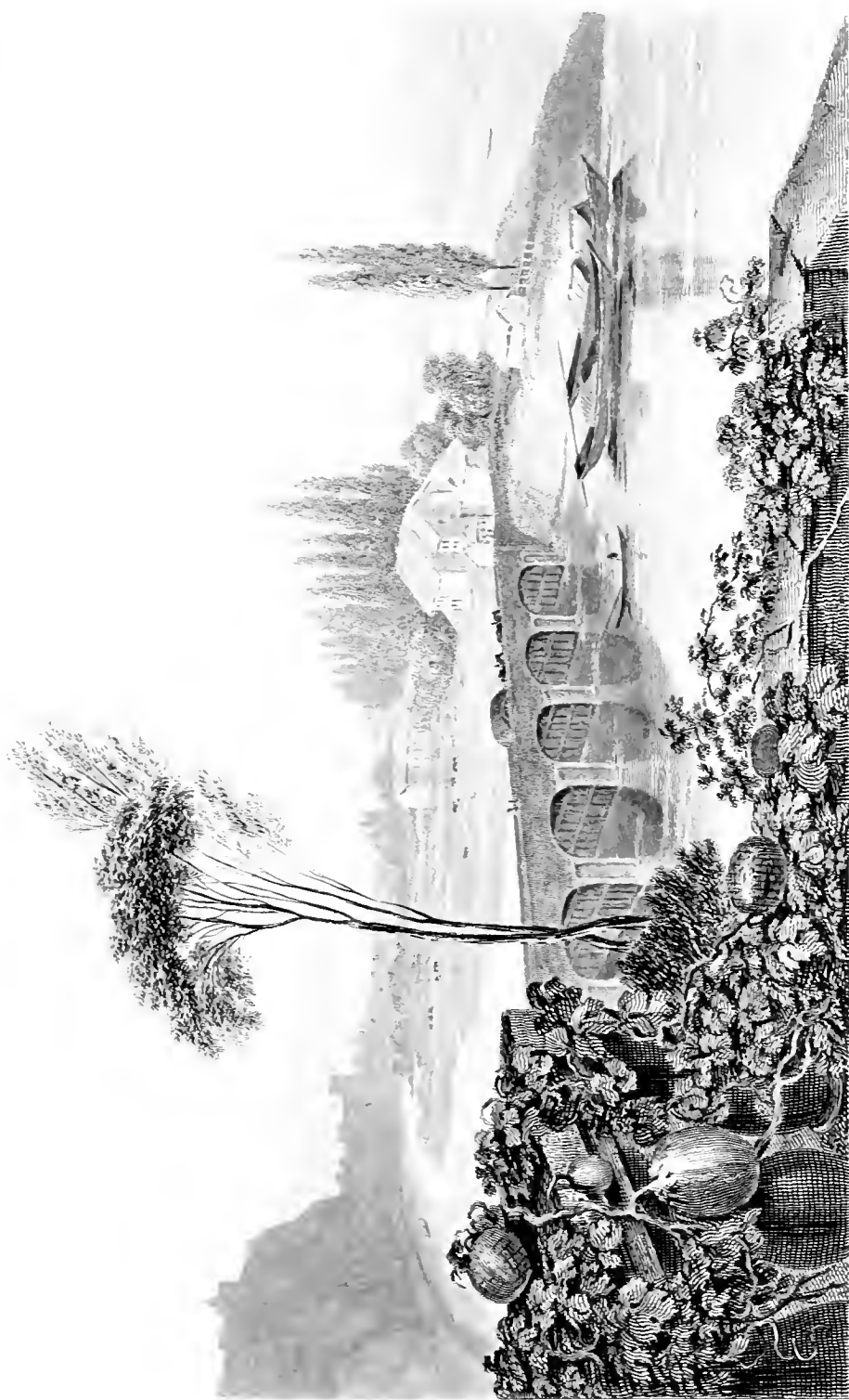
† The view from the right bank of the Saone, near to where this river merges its waters, and loses its name, in the Rhone, is one of the most picturesque of Lyons. Plate the first.

The road from Lyons towards Chamberry, through Bourgoin, as far as Tour du Pin, is dull and uninteresting; but, soon after leaving this little town, the traveller arrives at the mountains by which he enters Savoy; these, until the opening of the road by the *route of the Grotto*, near Les Echelles, presented an almost insurmountable barrier against any carriage. So great were the difficulties, that we find, from the records of early travellers, that they arrived at Chamberry, on their way to the Cenis, by a considerable *détour*, either by Geneva or by Grenoble. But there were three paths practicable for mules across these mountains to Chamberry, besides that which is now the great road to the Cenis.* The first from Pont-Beauvoison, by Aiguebellette; the second by St. Genix and Novalesse; these were over the mountain de l'Épine, and were the most direct, but they were extremely difficult. The third, which crossed the Mont du Chat at the northern extremity of the range from Yenne to Bourget, appears to have been a road known to the Romans, from the remains of a temple, inscriptions, &c., which have been found on this passage of the mountain.†

At Pont-Beauvoison, on the *Guiers riv*, a river which is the boundary line between France and Sardinia, the *douaniers* of the respective governments are stationed. After crossing the bridge the road ascends the right bank of the river, and at length enters abruptly the defile of La Caille. Here the traveller should turn to enjoy the last view of France, and look back upon the beautiful scene which he is about to leave. From the plain the road ascends the mountain side, and then abruptly enters a ravine, at a considerable height above a

* The author of the present work has adverted to these roads to shew the difficulty which formerly existed in travelling from Lyons to Chamberry before the great road was made, by which carriages now proceed to these Alps, and traverse them with equal facility.

† It has been satisfactorily shewn, in the "Dissertation on the Passage of Hannibal across the Alps, by a Member of the University of Oxford," adverted to in the illustrations of the pass of the Little Saint Bernard, that this passage was the route of Hannibal, and the Mont du Chat, the first Alps at which he arrived, the spot on which he encountered the Allobroges.



stream, which foams beneath in its narrow and often concealed bed.* The route thence leads to Les Echelles,† a little town which owes its name to the mode of passing a cavern in its vicinity, through which formerly lay the only path to Chamberry. Those who travelled by the old road, ascended ladders placed on the face of the rock, to the height of one hundred feet; they then entered a cavern, and after climbing more than eighty feet through it, regained the day, in a deep cleft of the mountain; and a path, of which some vestiges remain, like a Roman pavement, enabled the traveller, with comparative ease and freedom from danger, to attain the summit of this extraordinary passage. This was an undertaking always dangerous to the unskilful, and often impracticable, for the cavern was the *embouchure* of the waters from the ravine above; and as the snow and torrents often interrupted the passage, it was only in the most favourable seasons that the undertaking could be accomplished. When the policy of a more intimate intercourse with France suggested itself to the enterprising mind of Charles Emmanuel the Second, Duke of Savoy, he determined to make a road here practicable for carriages; and the most celebrated act of his reign was the accomplishment of this great undertaking, which was called the *route of the Grotto*. By lowering the cleft in the mountain, and terracing a descent to Les Echelles, he made a road which was long considered one of the most extraordinary productions of human effort. A monument in the road contains a tablet, and the remains of an inscription, which was written by Emmanuel Tesoro, though usually attributed to the Abbé St. Réal, commemorative of the construction of this route. The monument betrays numerous marks of musket-balls, received in a severe contest upon this spot between some

* J. J. Rousseau has recorded among his follies, that it was here, on his way to revisit Madame des Warrens, at Les Charmettes, he enjoyed the pleasure of rolling stones from the road into the roaring torrent below, and observing them bound from ledge to ledge before they reached their goal in the depth and distance.

† An excursion from Les Echelles to the Grand Chartreuse can be accomplished easily in a few hours, and it is the best point to start from on a visit to this secluded spot.

French republicans and Savoyards. in the early part of the French revolution : but a paper sold by an old soldier, a *cantonnier*,* who keeps a hovel, and sells *eau-de-vie*, at the end of the new gallery, furnishes not only all of the inscription, which the balls of the revolutionists have made deficient, but a bombastic translation. in French, for the edification and amusement of travellers.†

CAROLVS · EMMANVEL · II
 SABAVDIE · DVX · PEDEMONTIS · PRINCEPS · CYPRI · REX
 PVBLICA · FELICITATE · PARTA · SINGVLORVM · COMMODIS · INTENTVS
 BREVIOREM · SECVRIOREMQVE · VIAM · REGIAM
 A · NATVRA · OCCVLSAM · ROMANIS · INTENTATAM · CETERIS · DESPERATAM
 DELECTIS · SCOPVLORVM · REPAGVLIS · AEQVATA · MONTIVM · INIQVITATE
 QVLE · CERVICIBVS · IMMINEBANT · PEDIBVS · PRECIPITIA · SVBSTERNENS
 .ETERNIS · POPVLORVM · COMMERCIIIS · PATEFECIT
 ANNO · MDCLXX.

The work thus recorded was certainly one of great difficulty, and much was accomplished in forming, in such a situation, even a narrow, steep, and difficult road : it served its purpose, however, above one hundred and fifty years. In 1803 this road was condemned by the French engineers ; and Napoleon has, by one of the most extraordinary of his great works, superseded the old road, and left it, with its monumental record, and the old cavern of Les Echelles, to be visited only as curiosities. The present road avoids altogether the direction of the old one : it sweeps round the little valley above the village of Les Echelles, rises by a gradual ascent, and when on a level with the road formerly attained by the route of the Grotto, enters, at once, the perpendicular face of the rock ; and a magnificent gallery twenty-five feet high proceeds a thousand feet‡ through the rock, over a road twenty-five

* A person stationed to keep the roads in order.

† L'an mil six cent soixante-dix, après avoir rendu heureux ses peuples, voulant encore étendre ses bienfaits, CHARLES EMMANUEL II., Duc de Savoie, Prince de Piémont, Roi de Chypre, força les roches à s'ouvrir, soumit au niveau les montagne . . . fit rouler sous les pieds leurs cimes menaçantes, et, supérieur aux Romains, qui n'essayerent pas une si glorieuse entreprise, supérieur à tant d'autres qui ne purent qu'en désespérer en la tentant, vainqueur enfin de la nature,—il ouvrit cette voie triomphante, qui, pour toujours, assure aux peuples divers les moyens de s'unir entre eux.

‡ 307 metres : a metre is about 1-13th more than an English yard.

feet wide. The approach to the gallery presents an extraordinary appearance; the valley of Les Echelles is so bounded by mountains that in the direction of the road no means of exit are apparent. On the face of the vast rocks which rise abruptly from the valley, a speck appears to terminate the line of the road. This speck is, in reality, the entrance to the famous work of Napoleon, the great gallery of Les Echelles; but it is scarcely credible that its opening should appear so small as it does; the effect arises from its contrast with the magnitude of surrounding objects.

The scene at the end of the gallery, looking towards France, must be very striking to a traveller from Savoy. Some time before arriving at this spot from Chamberry, he passes through a narrow and mountainous glen, the rocks close upon him, and he enters the gallery, which terminates in a beautiful view of the plain, the village, and the valley of Les Echelles, beyond which may be seen the mountains of the Grand Chartreuse. The present gallery was begun in 1803, and was opened to travellers in 1817: many interruptions occurred from its commencement; it was, at different times, suspended and renewed by the French, but the Sardinian government had the honour of completing it. From the gallery of Les Echelles the road to Chamberry lies through a sterile and uninteresting country. At Chamberry, however, it opens and improves; the soil is well cultivated, and the immediate neighbourhood is not devoid of interest. The objects most worthy of attention near Chamberry are Aix, Bourget, the Abymes of Myans, and Les Charmettes.

After leaving Chamberry the mountains are seen which divide Savoy from the department of the *Hautes Alpes*: these add to the picturesque, and relieve occasionally the tedium of travelling through the avenues of tall poplars, which extend nearly to the Isere. The road passes beneath the old fort of Montmelian, and the traveller shortly arrives at the town; the Isere is then crossed, and the route continues to ascend on the left bank of the river, whence the scene, looking back from near

the village of La Planèse upon the town and fort of Montmelian, and the valley of Isere, is very beautiful.*

The road soon after ceases to interest the traveller, who is not relieved from its dullness until he arrives near the neat little town of Aiguebelle, at the entrance of the valley of the Arc, about five miles above the confluence of this river with the Isere. Though the town is in the foreground, its appearance is insignificant, seen as it is below the vast mountain masses which bound the valley; of these the lower are richly wooded with chestnut and walnut-trees; those above them are covered with dark pines, and the whole surmounted by the snowy summits of the lofty mountains of the Maurienne.

The traveller now ascends the deep and narrow valley of the Arc, over a good road on the banks of the river, which struggles through its deep and rocky bed. The few patches of land which the steep sides of the valley offer to the peasant are carefully cultivated, but the produce is small. Soon after passing the dirty village of La Chambre, the traveller arrives at St. Jean de Maurienne, the chief place of the valley. There is little to interest him here: the time has happily passed when feudal tyrants could make matter for history and execration, and the political events of the Maurienne are almost forgotten with its *comtes*. The doctrines of Calvin excited some troubles at St. Jean, but these have passed away; and the bears and the avalanches are now the only disturbers of the tranquillity of these valleys. From St. Jean, several cols, on the southern side, lead by mountain paths into Dauphiny.

Before arriving at the town of St. Michel, which is about half way between Lyons and Turin, the valley narrows to a defile; but it opens again into a little plain, in which the town is situated. Travellers usually pass through the suburbs only, but it is worth the trouble of ascending through the narrow streets of the town, to attain the site of an old tower, and look over the little plain and course of the Arc below.†

* Second Plate.

† End Vignette.



The route varies little in character as it advances to Modane; but beyond this town it rises high above the bed of the Arc, skirts the mountain of Bramante, and continues beneath a dense forest of pines, at a great elevation above the river, which divides the road from the Fort of Lessillon. There is a savage character in this scene. It is barren, deep, and extensive on the one side, and there is a dark forest on the other; the road is terraced over a gulf of frightful depth; and on the opposite brink, overhanging the ravine, the fort rises in a formidable succession of ramparts, which command the passage:* some defensive works are also constructed on the road-side. A little beyond, the fort communicates with the highroad by a bridge thrown across the gulf, at an alarming height above the torrent.

The country beyond Bramante, as the traveller approaches the Cenis, becomes more sterile. The stunted corn scarcely repays the labour of its cultivation. At Termignon, the straight valley, through which the river Aysse descends from its source in the Vanoise, is abruptly left, and the road continues, by a zig-zag ascent on the right of the Arc, through a glen which extends from Termignon to Lanslebourg, where the traveller soon arrives; and after passing through its dirty, narrow streets, reaches an excellent inn (the Hotel Royal), at the foot of the passage of the mountain.

The inhabitants of Lanslebourg from time immemorial, were innkeepers, muleteers, and porters; whose entire occupation it was to convey passengers and merchandise across the Mont Cenis. These were regulated by a syndie appointed by the government, but their occupation is now gone; the fine new road renders their services unnecessary, and a few years will either find them fresh employment, or proportion their numbers to the demand for their services. They are at present occasionally employed as cantonniers, to assist those who are regularly appointed by the government of Sardinia to keep the

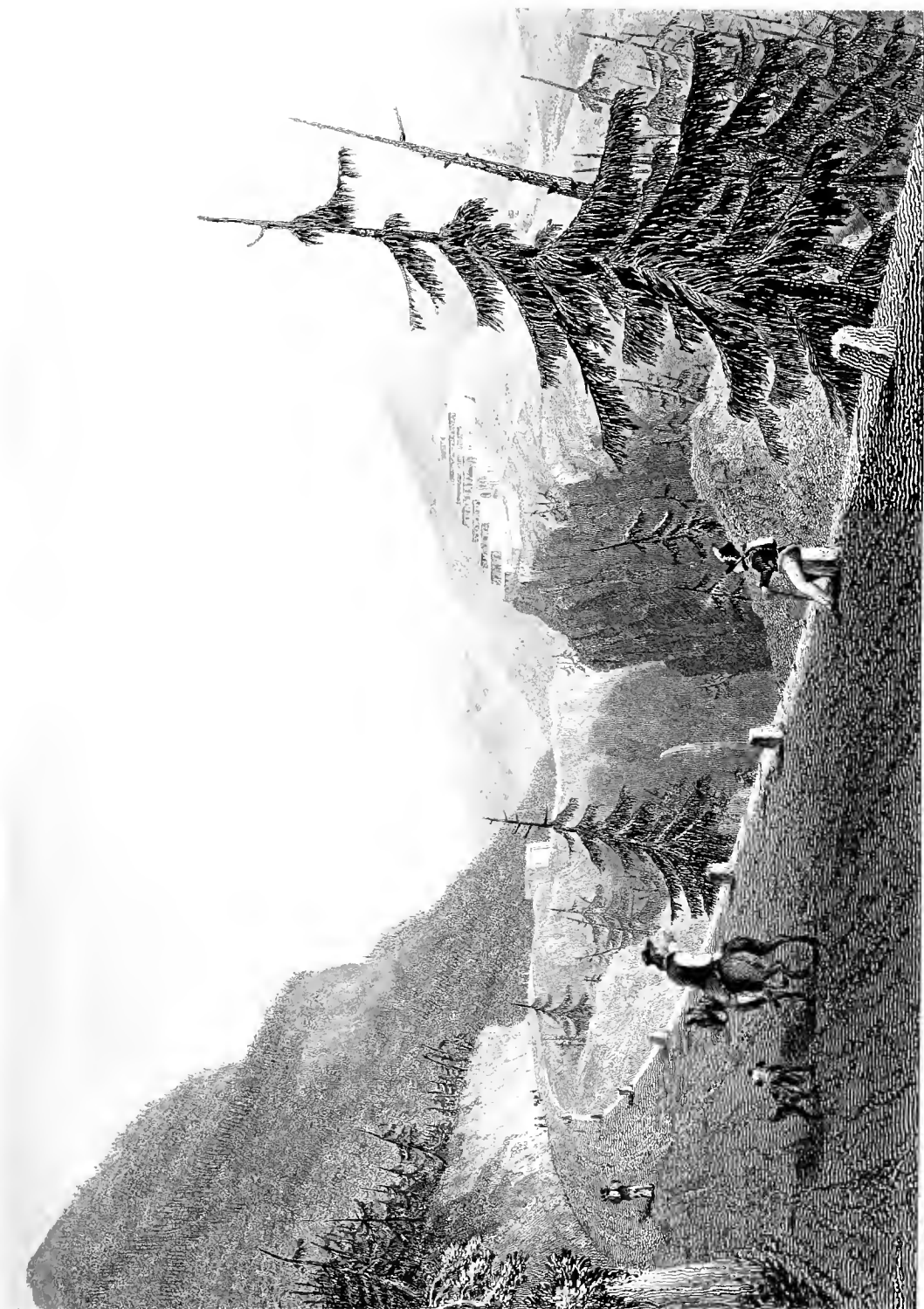
* Third Plate

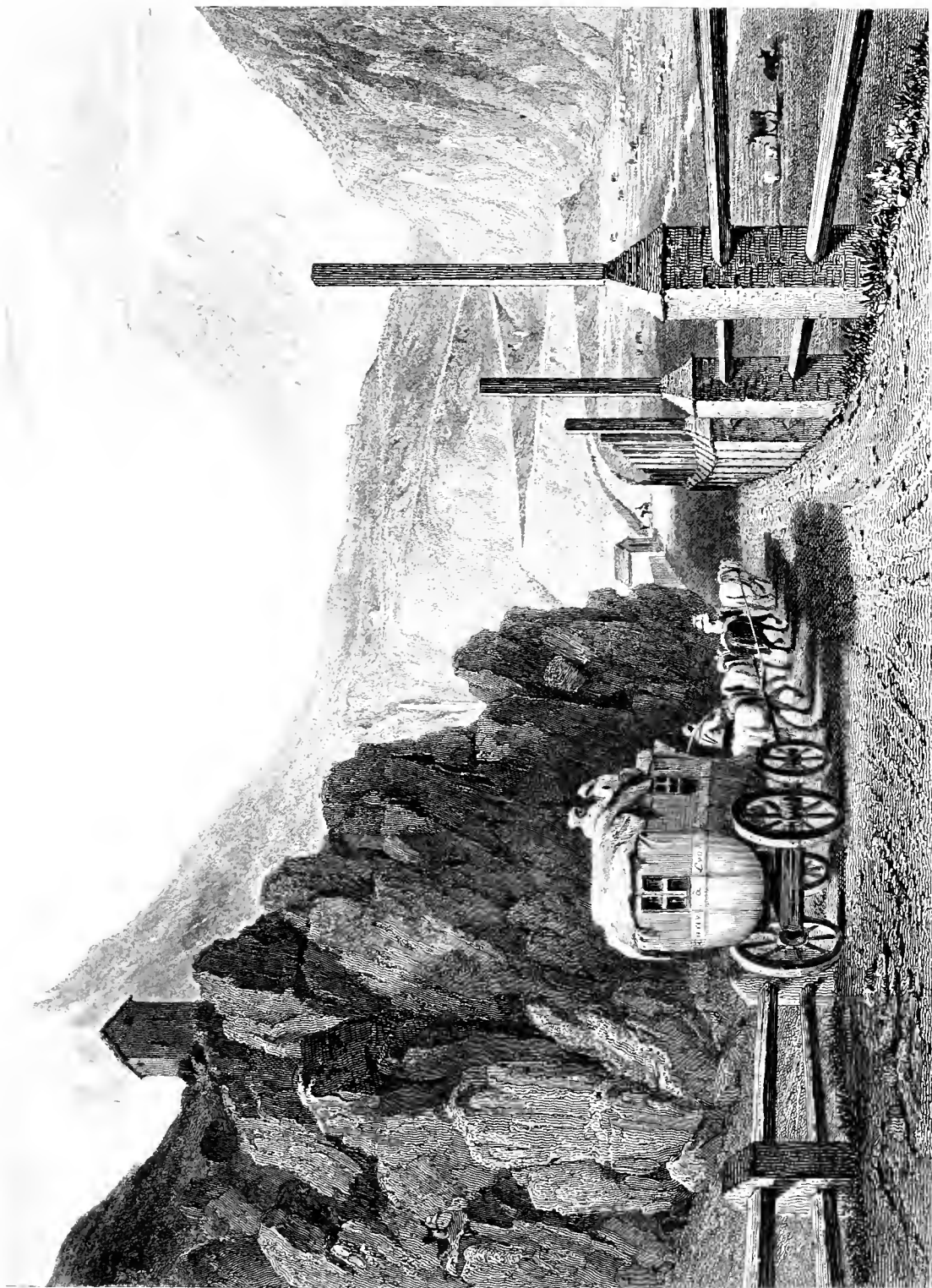
road in order. Near the hotel a barrack has been built, which is capable of accommodating three thousand men: this, together with the appointments on the plain of the Cenis, gives a military character to the pass. A bridge, close to the caserne, is thrown over the Arc; the road beyond it winds up by a succession of finely constructed ramparts, and the traveller ascends with ease at a rapid pace, over a road which, from Lanslebourg to the highest point, rises at the rate of only one foot in fifteen.

The traveller soon reaches *La Ramasse*. The custom of descending *en traineau* from this place, is still practised in the winter; but the velocity of the descent over the new road is considerably less than it was over the old; and the danger which formerly tempted travellers to this fearful amusement is almost entirely removed. The Englishman of whom it is recorded that he staid eight days at Lanslebourg for the purpose of risking his neck three times a-day, would now lose half the desire to descend *en ramasser*.

Not far from La Ramasse is the highest point of the passage, which is 2100 metres, about 6780 English feet, above the level of the sea: the road from this elevation descends to the plain of the Cenis. On approaching it, the lake and the plain, seen in its extent almost to the Grand Croix, and bounded by lofty mountains, on which the snow eternally rests, present a striking scene.* Numerous buildings on the plain suggest the idea of a larger community than is to be found there; but it is probable that the time is not distant when the inhabitants on the Cenis will become as numerous as those of Lanslebourg, since people are encouraged to reside on the mountain by exemption from taxes. Among the buildings are the post-house, the inn, the hospice, the barracks, and station of carabineers, for the examination of passports; and along the road from Lanslebourg to Susa are numerous houses of refuge for the shelter of those who have the misfortune to traverse the mountains in bad

* Title Vignette.





weather. Posts are erected along the road ; and a piece of wood, fastened upon each, so as to form a *cross*, at once assists the direction of the traveller, and preserves these posts, by the restraints of religion, from being used for fire-wood, where the temptation to destroy them for this purpose is very great.

The lake is celebrated for the delicious trout which it yields ; and not only with these are the establishments on the Cenis abundantly provided, but with excellent wines, bread, and meat ; and the intercourse with the plains of Piedmont is so constant, that fruits, fresh and delicious, are found at the inn : game, too, in season, is rarely wanting at the traveller's repast on the Cenis, particularly in August, when great quantities of grouse are taken on the surrounding mountains. During the winter the lake is frozen above six months ; at which time the peasants drive their herds across it. The only precaution used at the commencement of the season is to trace if the fox has yet traversed the frozen surface.

Beyond the Grand Croix, the road winds down in terraces to the plain of St. Nicolas. Formerly, the road, after crossing a torrent, skirted the mountains on the southern side of the plain, and passed through a gallery cut in the rock : there was also a covered way, strongly built, to guard the traveller against the avalanches which fall from the mountain on this side, and which, from their force and frequency, have actually worn the side of the mountain smooth ; but against these the power of man could place no restraint. The avalanches descended and crushed the covered way ; dreadful accidents occurred ; and it was at length determined to form the present line of road, and to destroy the bridge across the torrent which led to the gallery, lest future travellers should be tempted by the shorter route to expose themselves to danger. In the middle of the little plain of St. Nicolas is the barrier of Piedmont, where a custom-house is established.*

* Plate Fourth.

Soon after entering Piemont the road winds round the side of the mountain which overhangs the deep valley of Novalese, and near a turn, which leads to the hamlet of Bart, the traveller looks down upon the miserable village of La Ferrière. The old route must have been a fearful one, to judge from the ruggedness and extreme declivity of the path. The new road is well constructed, and descends gradually, following the sinuosities on the side of the mountain.

From La Molaret the extent of the scene in the valley beneath is very striking, but not picturesque; the line of the old road may be traced from La Ferrière to Susa, and on the opposite side of the valley the enormous mountain of Roche-Melon shuts out the view of the plains of Italy from the traveller.* Soon, however, after leaving La Molaret, when near St. Martin's, the valley of the Doire opens, and the scene terminates in the plains beyond Turin.

From St. Martin's the route winds along the borders of a precipice, with a descent so gentle, and over a road so admirably constructed, and defended by parapets, that the traveller proceeds without any idea of danger. A part of the road above Venaus, a village in the valley of Novalese, is exposed to avalanches: but so much regard has been paid to security against this danger, that accidents can scarcely happen, unless the traveller exposes himself to them incautiously.

Before arriving at Susa, even in the Combe of Giaglione, the traveller is sensible of his approach to Italy. The valley

* The vast mountain called the Roche-Melon, which bounds the eastern side of the valley of Novalese, rises 9500 feet above Susa, and formerly had on its summit the little chapel of *Notre Dame des Neiges*, which contained an image of the Virgin held in great veneration, to which a pilgrimage was annually made in the month of August from Susa and its environs; but the path which led to this chapel was so dangerous, that fatal accidents frequently happened there, and the lives of many were sacrificed to their devotion; for, unable to breathe in an air so rare, they fell over such dreadful precipices, that, to use the language of the Rector of Mont Cenis to Saussure—"Que ceux qui tomboient là étoient tellement brisés, que l'oreille étoit la plus grande piece de leur corps qui demeurât dans son entier!" But these dangerous pilgrimages are now discontinued; and the revered image, the object of this devotion, in *high places*, has been transferred to Susa.



Engraved by W. Pennington

of the Doire and the plains of Piemont lie before him; and the foreground of this beautiful scene is rich with chestnuts, walnuts, vines, and the productions of a fruitful soil.

On entering *La Chiave d'Italia*, as Susa has been called, the ruins of the Fort of La Brunette are passed: in its days of power it was so cautiously watched, that a stranger observed to stop, and look at it for a moment, was ordered to pass on. It was considered one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and guarded both the roads, to the Cenis and the Genève. The early importance of Susa is attested by many Roman remains: among these is the celebrated arch raised by Cottius in honour of Augustus; beneath which the route lay through the valley of Oulx to the Mont Genève.

After leaving Susa, the road crosses the Cenisella, a stream which descends from the Cenis and flows into the Doire. At Busolino this river is passed: thence it flows on the left of the road until it reaches the Po below Turin.

Among the feudal remains which the traveller passes in the valley of the Doire, below Susa, are those of the picturesque chateau of St. Jorio; but the most extraordinary ruins are those of the monastery of St. Michel,* on the Monte Pirchiriano, above St. Ambrogio. The founder was Hugues de Dé-cousu, who went to Rome and obtained absolution for some crime which he had committed, from the Pope. Hugues, in his gratitude, promised to build a church on his return, which he did on the Monte Pirchiriano, and consecrated it to St. Michel. Privileges were granted to the new establishment by Pope Silvester; and it soon became, under the rules of St. Bénéoit, so celebrated for its splendour and power, that its abbots boasted of having founded and restored one hundred and forty churches and rich abbeys in France and Italy.†

* Fifth Plate.

† Saussure and Milan both describe their visits to the ruins of the monastery, and the latter gives an interesting sketch of its history, but without mentioning the period of its foundation. The difficulty of erecting such an edifice on the mountain must have been very great, as it requires an hour and a half to attain its site. When attained, the mass of ruins appears enormous: a part of these is entered by a large flight of steps. There are many ancient tombs of the monks; some of them are open,

On one of its towers there was, until lately, a telegraph belonging to a series which communicated between Paris and Milan.

The road from St. Ambrogio passes through Avigliana and Rivoli, where there is a chateau belonging to the court of Sardinia. From Rivoli, a fine avenue, nearly two leagues in length, extends to Turin.

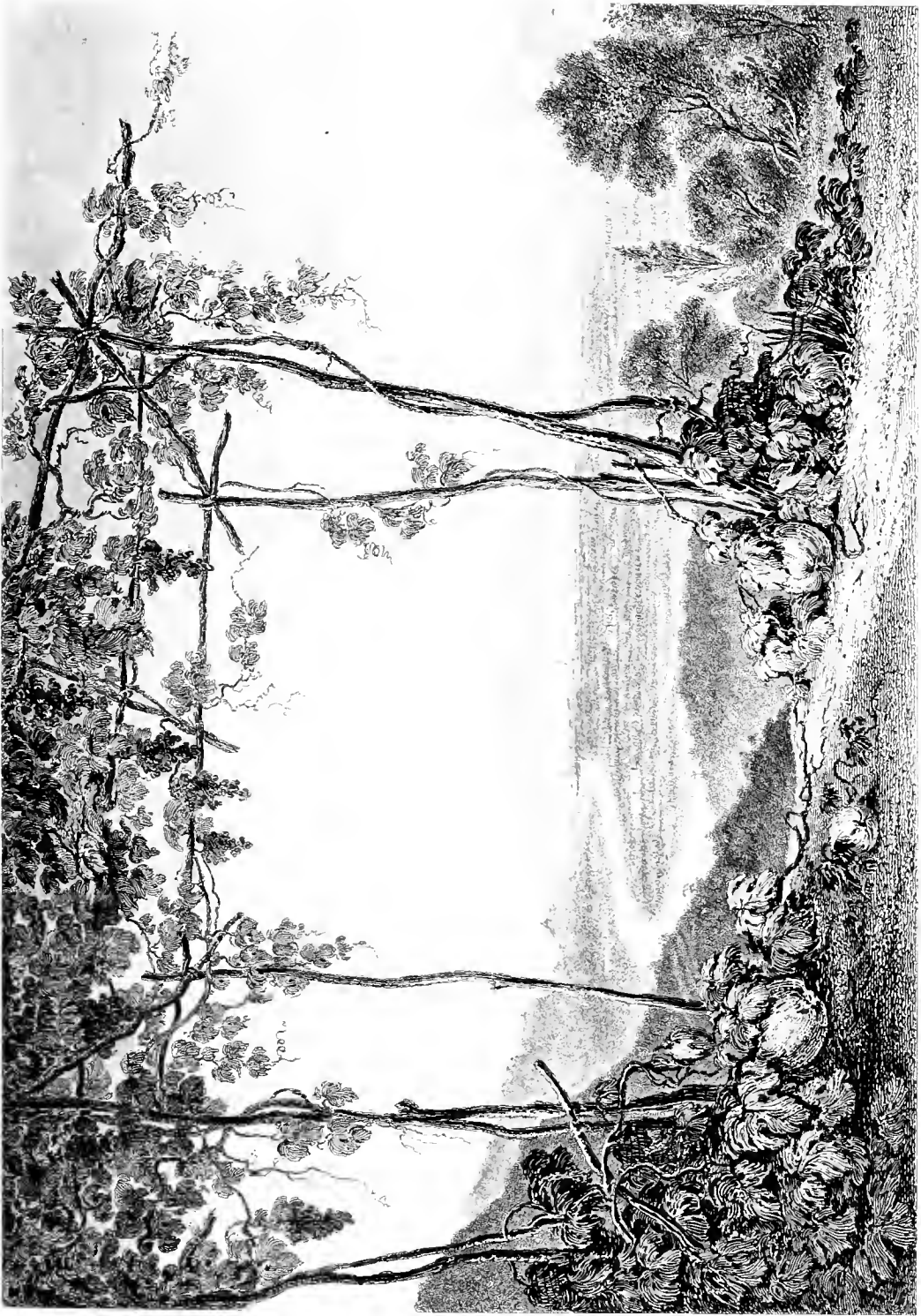
A description of Turin can be found in almost every topographical work on Italy; it is precluded from these illustrations, by the limits of the text. The author, however, cannot pass unnoticed the view of the city from the hill of the Superga. The church on its summit is distant from Turin about five miles, and the ascent to it is so very steep that it employs above two hours to arrive there;* but the scene from the summit richly repays the trouble of reaching it, and exceeds any of a similar character that the author has ever enjoyed. Thence are seen in the plain beneath, Turin, the Po winding by the city, and collecting the tributary streams that enrich the fertile country through which they flow, the avenue to Rivoli, and the valley of the Doire, leading to the Mont Cenis, the lower ranges of the mountains, studded with towns

and the bodies can be seen in a dry state, like the mummies of the Guanches : they are spoken of as having been objects of curiosity and reverence for many ages. Some Gothic epitaphs remain ; one of these marks the tomb of Rondolphe of Montebello, who died in 1359 ; and another of Sebastian Serrai, a cardinal, who was abbot of this monastery in 1577 : there is also an ancient tomb without an inscription, said to be that of Comte Thomas, a bastard of the house of Savoy, who lived in 1233, and who is recorded as a great benefactor to this abbey.

The view from the monastery is described, by those who have visited it, as magnificent, extending, from the vast ramparts of the Cenis, through the lower valley of the Doire, which winds beneath the monastery, and enriches a scene that extends to Turin, the Monte Superga, and the extensive plains which, beyond these, melt into the horizon.

* It is generally known that the church was built by Victor Amadeus, in consequence of a vow which he made to raise such an edifice, if Heaven assisted him to relieve the city of Turin, which in 1706 was besieged by the French. Turin was delivered, but this votive building was not begun until 1715 ; it was completed in 1731. It is a splendid object to all the surrounding country. Its internal splendour, however, has been much overrated ; it exhibits a mixture of magnificence and meanness, and much of what appears to be marble, is an imitation in painted wood and plaster, and even some of the tombs of the sovereigns of Sardinia, for this is their cemetery, share in this pretence.





and villages, and above and beyond the vast range of the high Alps, extending from the Viso to the Monte Rosa: these present a magnificent *coup d'œil*. The view* in this work is taken from a vineyard, on the descent from the church, and the scene is limited, in the horizon, to the range of the Cottian Alps, from the beautiful peak of the Monte Viso to the Mont Cenis.

There is much obscurity in the early history of the pass of the Mont Cenis. Though it has been for many ages the most frequented passage of the Alps between France and Italy,† there is no certain evidence that it was known to the ancient Romans. That Marius, or Cæsar, or Pompey,‡ or Augustus, traversed the Alps by the Cenis, or made a road across it, is by no means clear. The commentators upon the early writers appear to have confounded this passage with that of the Mont Genève, as both of them meet at Susa. Neither in the Antonine Itinerary nor the Theodosian Tables is mention made of the Cenis; neither is there any station on the mountain nor in the vale of the Arc noticed.§ Those writers who have reported that the passage by the Cenis was the route of a Roman army, or general, have usually given descriptions which

* Plate Sixth.

† The Italians, from this circumstance, have given it the name of the *Strada Romana*.

‡ The fragment preserved by Sallust of a letter from Pompey to the senate, which is supposed to refer to a road that Pompey made across the Cenis, can in the judgment of those acquainted with the passes of the Alps, refer only to the Mont Genève; and Ammianus Marcellinus, who is referred to by Gibbon, as if to support his opinion of Constantine's passage by the Cenis, describes most distinctly the passage by the Mont Genève. Gibbon says that "Constantine preferred the road of the Cottian Alps, or, as it is now called, of Mont Cenis, and led his troops with such active diligence, that he descended into the plains of Piedmont before the Court of Maxentius had any certain intelligence of his departure from the banks of the Rhine;" but he is neither borne out by Eusebius nor Zosimus in this statement. The latter merely says, that "Constantine having collected an army from the barbarians whom he had subdued, from the Germans and other Celtic nations, and also from levies in Britain, which altogether amounted to 90,000 infantry and 8000 horse, descended from the Alps into Italy."

§ Simler, in *de Alpibus Commentarius*, says, "Nor yet do we think that this mountain alone is the Cottian Alps, but others also by which the passage lies into Gaul, between the Maritime and Grian Alps; for, from Susa through Novelesia and Ferrara, one ascends Mont Dionysius, whose summit is called La Posta; thence one descends into the valley Morienna to Luneberg, where one perceives a statue of

can only apply to the pass of the Genève, and sometimes even state that its route lay under the arch of Cottius. This arch is placed at the entrance of the valley of the Doria Susana, which leads from Susa to the Mont Genève, and not to the passage of the Mont Cenis. The inscription upon the arch of Susa, though it mentions the people around and beyond the Mont Genève, even to the Caturiges, who were subject to Cottius, takes no notice of any on the Cenis, nor of the Garoceli, who were known to have inhabited the Upper Maurienne.*

It appears to be the fact, that the historians of Charlemagne are the first who name the Cenis, and they relate that Pepin crossed this mountain to attack Astolphus, King of the Lombards, and assist Pope Stephen III. Charlemagne often crossed the Cenis during his wars with the Lombards; and his son, Louis le Débonnaire, is reported to have been the founder of the hospital on the plain of the Cenis. Charles the Bald, the son of Louis, after crossing that mountain, died, according to the annals of St. Bertin, at a miserable village, Brios, near Bramante. His death was imputed to poison administered to him by his Jew physician.

Dionysius placed on a column in the forum, which is a subject of worship to the Gauls, and from which the mountain is supposed to derive its name. Some call this mountain Cinisium, others Cinerum. Through this pass some write that Charlemagne, King of France, led an army against Desiderium, King of the Lombards."

* Why the pass of the Cenis was not so early known as that of the Genève and some others, may be thus explained. In seeking a passage across the Alps, the general and most obvious course seems to have been, to ascend the valleys and courses of rivers on one side, and descend by the nearest valley on the other. The Cenis on the side of the Lanslebourg offers no valley to explore, for the course of the river Arc is from the Mont Iseran, where it rises; and at the foot of the Mont Cenis, in the valley of the Arc, there is nothing to indicate a passage by this mountain. There is no doubt that the pass of the little Mont Cenis, from Bramante to Exilles, and that of the Col de la Rue, from Modane to Bardonneche and Oulx, were known very long before the present pass of the Cenis; but both these passes have valleys descending to the Arc which would tempt the traveller to explore them. The latter, *Mons Rudus*, seems to have been one of the routes adopted by Julius Cæsar, when he crossed the Alps to suppress the inroad of the Helvetii; and troops often crossed by these passes during the wars of France and Savoy. It may be said that the ascent of the Mont Cenis might have been made by the course of the river Cenisella, which offers on the Italian side the usual appearance of a passage. It must be considered that the Alps were not explored by the Italians, but by their invaders, the Gauls, who poured their hordes into the fertile country of Italy, to luxuriate in a soil which claimed from them less labour as a recompense for its enjoyment.

From this period the pass of the Cenis appears to have become the usual route for travellers from France into Italy, and frequent mention is made of it in the military annals of Piemont. Many writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relate their adventures on crossing these Alps: among them Condé, Cardinal Bentivoglio, and other distinguished travellers, have recorded their admiration of the grandeur of the scenes, or the dangers and pleasures of their journey across these mountains.*

But it remained for Napoleon Buonaparte to make this pass available to travellers at all seasons of the year, and associate his name with its history as long as human record can last. In 1802 the first consul decided upon opening a communication by a grand route between the Maurienne and Piemont; and, after a careful survey by M. Dausse, chief engineer, of the different cols which led from one of these countries to the other, that of the grand Mont Cenis was chosen.

In 1803 the works of the new road were begun, and so far completed in 1810, that, during that year 2911 carriages, 14,037 carts and waggons, and 37,255 horses and mules traversed the mountain.

Not more than five months of effective labour could be accomplished in a year. Generally the works began about the middle of May, and ended in the beginning of October.† The expense of these astonishing works has been estimated at 7,460,000 francs, nearly 300,000*l.* sterling.

* Grosley, in speaking of the guides of Lanslebourg, says, that in bearing the *chaise à porteur*, the old mode of travelling across the Cenis, "they relieve each other with great facility, and converse gaily with their charges, of the princes, cardinals, and generals, whom they have borne across the mountains, and on the generosity of their highnesses: one said his father had assisted to carry the Duc de Vendôme, who was *le plus drôle de corps du monde*. To an inquiry, if a certain captain of Algerines, called Hannibal, had not passed that way with a great army, about two thousand years ago, one replied that they had heard speak of that man, and that the people of the little St. Bernard said that it was by their country that he had passed; but that the Maréchal de Villars and the Cardinal de Polignac had assured the people of Lanslebourg that he went by the Cenis.

† The scenes in summer, during the progress of the works, must have been very animated: from the Tavernettes to the plain of St. Nicolas sometimes more than two

The establishment of twenty-five houses of refuge along the line of road, renders the passage of the Cenis, even in winter, perfectly safe. These houses are placed on the spots the most dangerous, and become asylums against the tempests that sometimes rage in the Alps.

From Lanslebourg to Susa, about nine posts and a half, this magnificent road is everywhere thirty feet wide, and so easy of ascent, on either side of the mountain, that, from Susa to the plain of the Cenis, the journey can be accomplished in four hours in a carriage; and from Lanslebourg to the Tavernettes, in little more than half the time.

By a decree of the 20th January, 1811, the French government established a tax on the route of the Mont Cenis, as a fund for the payment of the cantonniers; which produced, from the 1st of March, 1811, to the 1st of March, 1813, 328,174 francs, 13,127*l.* The King of Sardinia continues this tax.

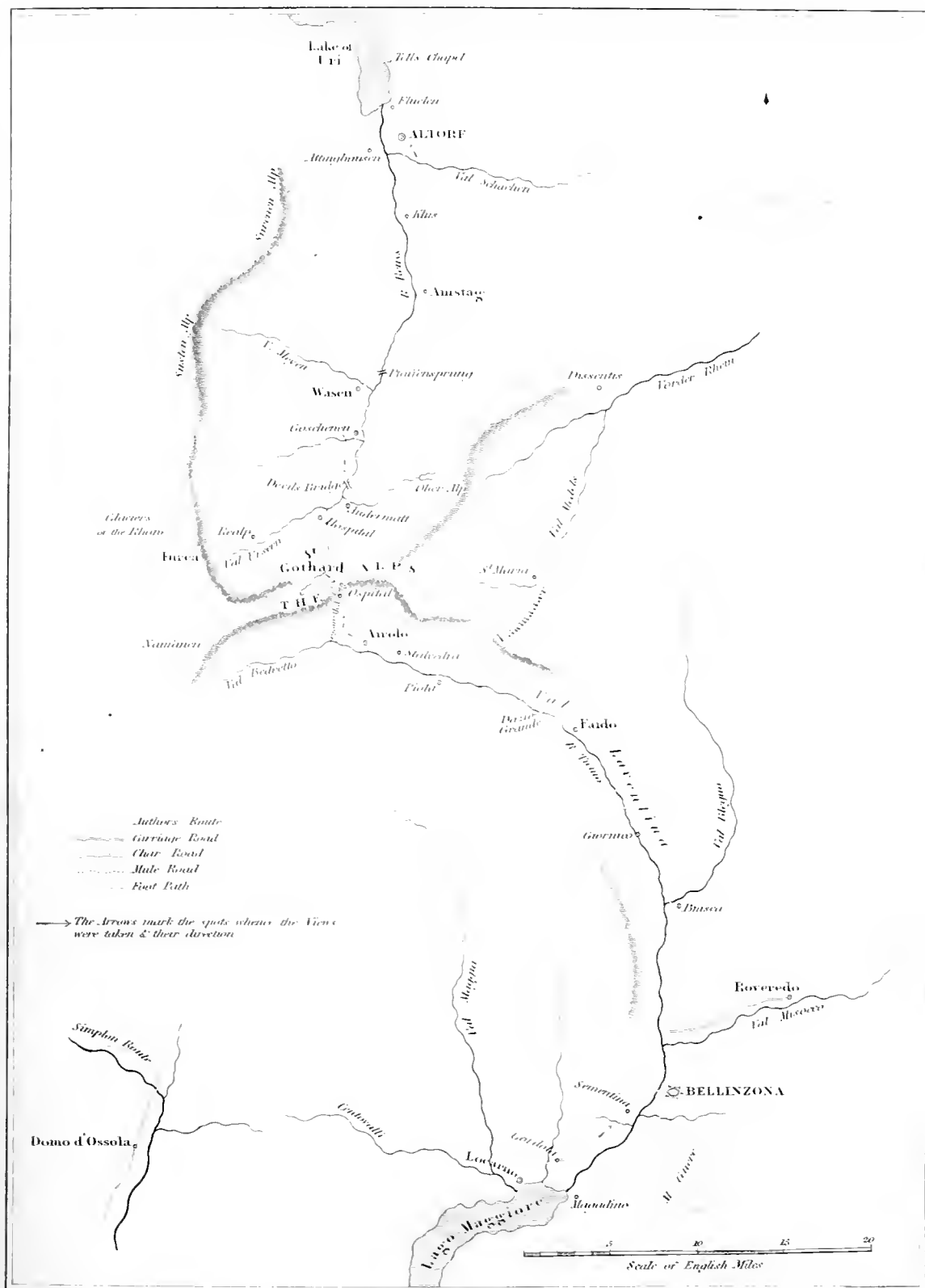
It was, at one time, contemplated by Napoleon to erect a monument on the Cenis to commemorate the conquest of Europe by the French; and twenty-five millions of francs, one million sterling, were destined to its expense. M. Derrin, who was engineer in chief, charged with the works of the Mont Cenis some time before their completion, had many questions submitted to him by the French Institute, upon the practicability of erecting a permanent trophy on the plain of the Cenis. Too many difficulties, however, presented themselves, and the plan was abandoned. No one will feel that its accomplishment was necessary to the memory or the honour of Napoleon, whilst this stupendous work—his conquest of the Alps—is seen in the magnificent route of the Cenis.

thousand workmen were employed; most of them *barracked* on the banks of the lake, 1940 metres above the level of the sea. At sunset a last salute announced the close of the labours of the day; and during half an hour, the reports of blasting the rocks reverberated in the mountains: a little after, the camp was illuminated by the fires of the workmen preparing their evening repast.

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PASSES OF THE ALPS



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FROM THE LAGO MAGGIORE TO ALTORF BY THE MONT ST. GOTHARD.

ROUTE

FROM THE

LAGO MAGGIORE TO THE LAKE OF URI,

BY

THE MONT SAINT GOTHARD.

ON leaving Italy, to enter Switzerland by the pass of the St. Gothard, the traveller approaches the Val Levantine, which conducts to this mountain, either by the Lake of Lugano and the Monte Cenere, or the Lago Maggiore.

The passage to Bellinzona, by the Lago Maggiore and Locarno, is not so much frequented as it deserves to be: travellers from Italy generally approach Bellinzona by the Lake of Lugano; but the facilities now afforded by the establishment of a steam-boat, may induce many to make the longer voyage by the Lago Maggiore, the scenery of which is beautiful. The proximity of the Alps gives to the lake a bold and magnificent character; and, whether the bases of the mountains sink into its waters, or their summits bound the horizon in the distance, reflected from the placid surface of the lake, these scenes excite emotions of the grand and the beautiful which can scarcely be exceeded.

Locarno, at the northern extremity of the Lago Maggiore, is one of the chief places of the canton of the Tessin, and is, alternately with Bellinzona and Lugano, the seat of the government of the canton. It is situated at the meeting of several valleys which descend from the Lepontian Alps, of which the Val Levantine and the Val Maggia are the principal. The Centovalle, which leads by a difficult route, in fourteen

hours, from Domo d'Ossola, at the foot of the Simplon, terminates also at Locarno.

The distance from Locarno to Bellinzona is about nine miles, through a country of singular richness and beauty. The canton of the Tessin has often been described as that portion of Switzerland which, from its situation on the southern side of the Alps, possesses all the advantages of an Italian climate: the soil is fertile, and its produce luxuriant. The traveller from Switzerland will be struck by the almost magical change of scenes effected in his rapid descent from the snows and sterility of Alpine regions, to the richness of the valley around Bellinzona.

The views presented to the traveller in his approach to Bellinzona, from Locarno, through the valley of Riviera,—a name by which the little plain is distinguished which terminates the Val Levantine, are picturesque and beautiful, particularly the view from the bridge of Sementina, whence Bellinzona and its castellated mounts are first seen on this road.*

Bellinzona is the key to Switzerland by these Alps, as it commands the various passes which *débouche* into the Val Levantine;—from the Valais, by the Naufanen; from the forest cantons, by the Saint Gothard; from Dissentis, and the valley of the Vorder Rhin, by the Lukmanier; and of the Bernardin, by the valley of Misocco. The important station of Bellinzona has exposed it to sieges and sufferings in every contest in which the Swiss have been involved; and the Alps afforded to the people of Bellinzona little protection from the hordes of barbarians who formerly descended through their valley, or the late barbarians of the French army who, at the end of the eighteenth century, in the desire to extend the blessings of their republicanism, made a reckless sacrifice of the property, the liberty, and the lives, of the Swiss.

* Plate the First. It would be well worth the time which the traveller might devote to it, to make an excursion to Locarno from Bellinzona, if he have arrived at this city by any other route.



Engraved by W. P. P. P.

Soon after leaving Bellinzona, to ascend the Val Levantine, the road crosses the Möesa, a river which flows from the Bernardino, through the Val Misocco: the lower Val Levantine is exceedingly fertile, but without picturesque interest. About eight miles above the Möesa, near Biasco, the traveller passes the entrance to the Val Blegno: the vast *débris* of the mountain, which fell across this valley in the year 1512, may be seen from the road in the Val Levantine. The fallen mass arrested the course of the river Blegno, and formed a large lake, which continued above two hundred years: in 1714 it burst a passage, and swept its way, with great destruction to lives and property, into the Lago Maggiore.

It is not until the traveller arrives near Giornico that the passage assumes a wild and mountainous character; here the torrent is interrupted in its course by vast blocks of granite which have fallen into the valley; and the road is constructed amidst rocks, which are interspersed with large chestnut and walnut-trees, sometimes overhanging the torrent, and often heightening the effect of scenes of striking wildness and grandeur. A little way above Giornico, on the road to Faido, the traveller passes over the field of battle fought and won by the Swiss against the Milanese in 1478. Their quarrel, which was fomented by the Pope's unccio, originated about a wood of chestnuts. A *ruse de guerre* renders this battle memorable. It took place in the winter; and a Captain Stanga, who commanded some of the troops of the country, advised the Swiss to turn the waters of the Tessin over the roads and meadows, and provide themselves with spikes for their shoes. In the morning of the attack the field of action was covered with ice; and the disadvantage under which the Milanese fought greatly contributed to the success of the Swiss army.

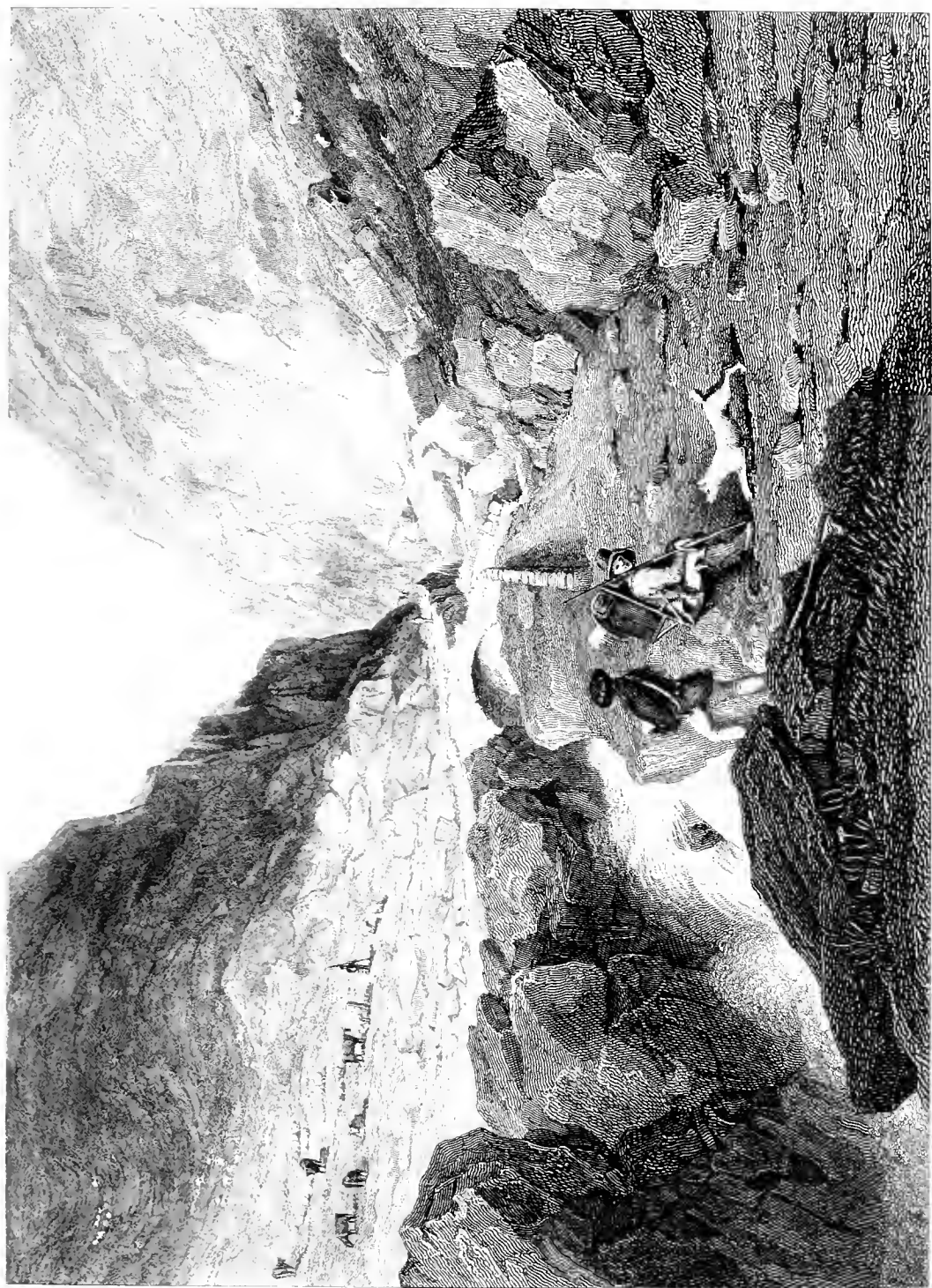
Faido is one of the principal places of the Val Levantine, but it is uninteresting both to the traveller and to the historian. The vine is cultivated as far as Faido, but the mulberry

and fig do not flourish above Giornico. About a league and a half above Faido is the ravine of the Dazio Grande, where the road, in some places, is cut out of the rock which overhangs the passage, and in other places is carried on a terrace, which is built upon arches from the bed of the torrent. Through this defile the Tessin rushes, foaming from rock to rock, in a continued cataract above half a mile in length. This part of the road, which is very well constructed, is one of the finest works of the engineer on the route of the Saint Gothard: it was accomplished and is preserved at a very great expense. The change from this fearful passage to the quiet of the upper valley, to which it leads, is remarkable. At the head of the gorge is the Dazio, or barrier, where a tax is received, to keep the road in repair. Thence the traveller proceeds nearly two leagues through the upper Val Levantine, which is industriously cultivated by the inhabitants of Piota and other villages in the valley; and, considering its elevation (three thousand feet above the sea), it is very productive. On approaching the defile of Stalvedro, which closes the head of this valley, and divides it from the Val Bedretto, a magnificent scene is presented. The mountains of St. Gothard appear to tower over the defile, combining with their grand forms the impressive effect of eternal snows, and making the barrier of Stalvedro dwindle to the scale and character of a dyke. Above these rocks, on the right bank of the Tessin, are the ruins of a tower built by the Lombards, and still bearing the name of one of the latest of their kings,—the tower of Desiderio.

Near the gorge of Stalvedro there is a path on the right, which leads through the Val Piora, and by the pass of Lukmanier, to Dissentis, and the country of the Grisons. On the left, the valley of Bedretto leads, by the pass of Naufanen and the valley of Eggenen, to Obergesteln in the Upper Valais.

About three quarters of a league from the Pass of Stalvedro, the traveller arrives at Airolo, a place where there is consider-





able bustle, arising from the commercial intercourse between Italy and the cantons of Switzerland, around the Waldstetten. Great numbers of mules are kept at Airolo, for the conveyance of merchandise across the St. Gothard as far as Göschenen: the road between these villages is now the only part of the route impracticable for carriages. On the Italian side, as far as Airolo, and on the side of Switzerland, from Göschenen to the Lake of Uri, the roads are good. The Swiss cantons interested in the completion of this route, have determined to render the passage of the mountain as good as the approaches to it, for the conveyance of heavy merchandise. In the autumn of 1825, the author met at Airolo the engineers who had been employed upon the survey, and who have undertaken to construct a carriage-road across the Mont Saint Gothard.

From Airolo a paved mule-path leads, by a steep ascent, towards the summit of the pass. On looking back from the Capella del Bosco, near the skirts of the last pine-forest in the ascent, the scene is very fine, of Airolo, the Val Bedretto, the Pass of Stalvedro, and, beyond these, the upper Val Levantine, and the mountains which bound the horizon toward Italy.* After leaving the chapel, a difficult zig-zag path leads to the entrance of the Val Tremola, the last defile on the ascent. There is an air of great solitude and wildness about this part of the road; a miserable little bridge,—the Ponte Tremola,†—crosses the torrent, and leads into the defile, which is greatly exposed to avalanches. Simler, in *De Alp. Com.* says, “Above the village Ayrolus, near the middle of the ascent of the mountain, is a bridge which here is called Tremulous, and crosses the Ticinus; and in winter it often happens, that the river being covered with ice and snow, travellers pass over the ice as if it were the bridge, to go the shortest way. Sometimes many venture when the ice is not strong enough, and men, as well as their beasts of burden, are drowned in the Ticinus. But when

* Plate the Second.

† Plate the Third.

you ascend above the bridge, there are no more woods, but rugged rocks and precipitous sides of mountains covered with snow, which, when it melts and falls down, makes the road very dangerous; for often the collected masses of snow fall from the summits of the mountains, and overwhelm the travellers passing beneath; and the snow is so agitated by slight causes, that the loud voice or clamour of those who pass below is said to move the snows, which first tremble, then fall, and, having accumulated, rush down with such violence that the whole mountain shakes. But it would appear that the bridge over the Ticinus is not called Tremulous because it actually shakes, but because those who pass over it, in ascending the mountain, begin to fear and tremble; so that, impressed with a sense of present danger by the very aspect of the terrific precipices of the mountain, they hasten over the spot as quickly as possible, in silence and trembling."

The Val Tremola terminates in an abrupt and rugged ascent to the summit of the pass, where the sterility of the scene is very impressive; where the road winds amidst blocks of granite, which, in some places, form dangerous precipices; and every aspect presents desolation and savage grandeur. Amidst these scenes Suwaroff defeated a division of the French army, under General Gudín, on the 24th of September, 1799, and gained the Pass of the Saint Gothard. On the face of a large rock, near the summit, letters rudely carved record SUWAROFF VICTOR; but his victory was useless, and his success of short duration: the skill of the French generals prevented his junction with the army of the Imperialists, and compelled him to make the well-known disastrous retreat of the Muttathal.

The desolate summit of the Pass of the Saint Gothard, situated six thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea, scarcely deserves the name of a plain. An inn is situated near the greatest elevation of the pass, where accommodation and refreshment may be had, which the fatigue of attaining, alone, renders endurable. Near the inn are the ruins of a small



convent, which existed there as early as the thirteenth century : it was one of those admirable establishments that were commonly founded on Alpine passes to relieve and protect the traveller in those otherwise inhospitable and dangerous regions. The amiable Saint Carlo Borromeo is recorded amongst the patrons who contributed to support the hospice of Saint Gothard. The convent was destroyed by an avalanche in 1775. Two years after, it was rebuilt upon a larger scale ; but the war of the Revolution in 1798 checked its benefits, and in 1799 it was pillaged by the *fraternizing* army of the French republic. Some soldiers, stationed there during the following winter, burnt all the wood of the building which they could collect, and left it a ruin, from which it has never been restored. On leaving the hospice to descend the valley of the Reuss, the traveller passes several lakes, the sources of the rivers which stream from each side of the mountain, the Tessin flowing towards Italy, and the Reuss towards the Lake of Uri. The largest of the lakes on the Saint Gothard is called the Lucendro, and is the principal source of the Reuss. The scene on the summit is wild and desolate, surrounded by high mountains, which are capped by snows and glaciers : here an impressive silence reigns, which is scarcely ever broken, except by the bells of the passing mules, or the song of the muleteer.*

From the hospice, a rudely paved road winds between the lakes, over broken and rocky ground, towards the valley of Ursern, through which the Reuss flows in its descent to the Lake of Uri. There is no relief to the traveller from a uniform sterility, until he arrives at the village of Hospital, where there was formerly a hospice, founded in the thirteenth century, for the benefit and assistance of those who passed that way. It is situated in that part of the Val Ursern which spreads out into a little plain, having at its north-eastern extremity the village of Andermatt, at the foot of the passage which leads to Dissentis by the Ober-Alp ; and in the opposite direction, a road

* Plate the Fourth.

by the Val Ursern leads over the Furca to the Valais. The appearance of Hospital is rather picturesque, from the remains of an old château, but there is no wood in the valley : a small pine-forest above Andermatt, which was formerly preserved most scrupulously, as a check to the avalanches which threaten destruction to the village, was destroyed during the campaign of 1799.

There is a character of repose and tranquillity in the little plain of Andermatt, which is strongly contrasted with the scene upon which the traveller enters when he leaves the Val Ursern to follow the course of the Reuss ; the road lies through a gallery pierced in the rock which overhangs the river, and around which there was formerly fixed a frame or scaffolding, upon which travellers and beasts of burden were obliged to make their dangerous passage. The present road, through the granite rock, was made in 1707, at the expense of the canton of Uri ; it is two hundred and twenty feet long, and in height and breadth twelve feet ; it bears the name of the Urnerloch. From the gallery, a steep path leads down to the Devil's Bridge, where a single arch of seventy feet span, one hundred feet above the cataract, is thrown across the torrent, which rushes obliquely beneath, and descends, within a short distance, above three hundred feet. It is not possible to conceive a more appalling scene than that which is presented at the Devil's Bridge, by the height of the rocks, the narrowness of the defile, and the roar and rush of the torrent beneath.* On the lower side of the ravine, the road, or rather the path, by which the bridge is left in passing through the gorge, is partly cut out of the vast wall of rock which rises immediately above, to a great height, and partly rests on arches firmly built into the rough surface of the rocks beneath, which serve to support the road as a terrace. The sides of the rock below the path descend perpendicularly to the torrent, and a low wall on the border of the terraced road is the only

* Title vignette.

protection from the danger of falling into the horrible abyss beneath. The waters of the Reuss, in descending to the bridge, turn abruptly to the right to pass beneath the arch, and then appear to rush with increased rage and violence from the momentary restraint which they encountered from the angle in the gulf.* The bridge itself does not contribute much to the sublime impression which the scene makes, unless the spectator be upon it; but it is impossible to think of such a structure, in such a situation, without shuddering at the idea of the danger to which those who built it must have been exposed.

The fearful emotions excited by these scenes are increased by the recollection that it was here some dreadful contests took place between the French and the Imperialists during the campaign of 1799. For the following account, from the *Précis des Evénemens Militaires*, by the Comte Dumas, it would be difficult to find a parallel. On the 15th of August, 1799, the French General Lecourbe, having joined the brigade of General Loison on the same day that he had carried the defences of the Mayenthal, advanced to secure the important post of the Saint Gothard, and, about four o'clock, met the outposts of the Imperialists, and forced them to fall back upon their entrenchments at the Devil's Bridge;† these rested upon the rocks on the right bank of the torrent of the Reuss. The French presented themselves at the bridge, and, charging the Austrians, reckoned upon passing it in the confusion with them, when, suddenly, the bridge disappeared between the parapets. Thirty feet of its length had fallen, with those who were fighting upon it, into the gulf below, and the remaining combatants were separated. This event forced the French

* Many travellers have been disappointed on arriving at the Devil's Bridge. They have been led to expect, from the views usually published, that the bridge could be seen at a great height above them; but the artists had either invented the scenes, or imagined a point of view which it is impossible to attain.

† Muller conjectures that the Devil's Bridge was originally a work of the Lombard kings, whose dominions extended northward to the valley of the Reuss.

grenadiers, who had advanced to the charge, to effect a retreat; but, borne on by those who were behind them, they were, for some time, exposed to a murderous fire from the Imperialists on the opposite rocks. During the night the Austrians retreated by the Ober-Alp, to avoid being cut off by the brigade of General Gudin, who had made a *détour* by the Grimsel, and fought his way, with incredible difficulty across the Furca, to fall upon the rear of the Imperialists: Lecourbe's troops, who had, during the night, repaired the bridge, found Gudin's brigade, on the morning of the 16th, on the right bank of the Reuss, in possession of the enemy's position. The conquest of the Pass of the Saint Gothard was the consequence, and, within forty-eight hours of the general movement of the French, Lecourbe was master of the summit and the valley by which he had ascended; but this important passage was reconquered in little more than a month by the Russian army under Suwaroff, who crossed the Saint Gothard to effect a junction with the Austrians. When he descended to Andermatt, he found that the Uernerloch had been blocked up, the rocks in the descent to the bridge blasted and strewn in the path, part of the bridge blown up, and other obstacles thrown in the way of his advance; but the Russians, rendered desperate by hunger and resistance, re-opened the gallery, and repaired the bridge, by throwing beams across, and lashing them together with the officers' scarfs. Hundreds of soldiers fell, in the struggle, into the abyss of the Reuss, before the Russians drove the French from their position, and descended into the valley between the Uernerloch and Göschenen.

From the Devil's Bridge to Göschenen the valley is dreary and savage. The Reuss is twice crossed before it reaches Göschenen: in its course thither it descends with so much noise, as it dashes over and among the rocks, that it has given to this part of the valley the name of the Krachenthal. Enormous masses of granite lie in the bed of the torrent and on the sides of the mountains. Not far from Göschenen there



is an immense block, which the people of the valley say the devil dropped there.* At Göschenen, the traveller, after having crossed a mountain-torrent which flows by the village, enters upon a good carriage-road that conducts to Altorf. Below Göschenen the road passes beneath forests of pines, and through villages surrounded by cultivation. There are some fine points of view in descending to Amstag, principally from a part of the road that rises high above the Reuss, which is seen foaming at the base of a well-wooded ravine: in the background of this fine scene is the lofty and beautiful form of the Windgelle mountain. Soon after passing the torrent of the Mayerbach, which descends from the Susten Alp, the traveller crosses the Reuss at the Pfaffensprung,† a bridge of ninety feet span, at a great height above the torrent: the situation is striking, but from no point picturesque. Thence through Amstag, a village at the base of the Windgelle, to Altorf, the road is excellent, but without much interest; the valley becomes richer in wood, particularly in walnut-trees; it is everywhere well cultivated, and the soil is very productive.‡

Altorf has associated with it some of the noblest recollections of Switzerland and the Swiss. The struggle for freedom from the tyranny of the house of Hapsburg, though contemplated by the people of the Waldstetten, commenced here in the courage of William Tell, much of whose history it is now fashionable to consider a fiction. The author is unwilling to be robbed of the pleasure which he feels in believing it to be true: it is asserted to be a tale of an earlier time than Tell; but this is no evidence against the story: such an event was as likely to have twice happened as once; and if

* Plate the Fifth.

† Every extraordinary situation in the Alpine districts has its tale of romance. The Pfaffensprung (the monk's leap) owes its names to the *fact*, that a monk, escaping with a damsel whom he was carrying off, leaped across this gulf with his prize.

‡ Before arriving at Altorf, the traveller crosses the torrent which descends from the Val Schachen, of which the inhabitants are said to be the finest race of people in Switzerland. Nearly opposite to the embouchure of the Schachen is the village of Attinghansen, by which a road passes over the Surenen Alps to the valley of Engleberg.

such a circumstance as that of the apple had previously occurred, it probably suggested the cruel condition offered by Gesler to Tell. A tower in Altorf, which bears the name of Tell's tower,* is said to occupy the spot upon which formerly stood the lime-tree against which the child of Tell was placed. The subject is painted on the tower: and wherever Tell is represented in sculpture, or in painting, the bow and the apple are considered necessary emblems. But perhaps the best evidence of its truth is found at the Tellenplatte, the rock upon which Tell leapt, when he escaped from the boat of Gesler. The rock is situated at the foot of the Aehsenberg, and a short distance from Fluelen, a little village, the port of Altorf, which is situated at the southern extremity of the Lake of Uri. Upon this rock, thirty years after Tell's death, which happened in 1358, a chapel was built to commemorate the event of Tell's escape, and a series of pictures in fresco on the wall represent the principal events of his life. Shooting at the apple on his son's head is one of the series. In the year of the completion of this chapel, 1388, at the general assembly of the people, there were present one hundred and fourteen persons who had known Tell during his life: these would not have allowed a falsehood to be recorded to aid, by the addition of romance, the immortal reputation of their compatriot.†

From Fluelen to Locarno is about twenty-eight leagues, and the communication by the Saint Gothard is so considerable, that fifteen thousand persons annually, and three hundred horses or mules laden with merchandise, pass weekly the hospice on the summit. Saussure states, that a thousand laden horses pass daily. This must be erroneous,

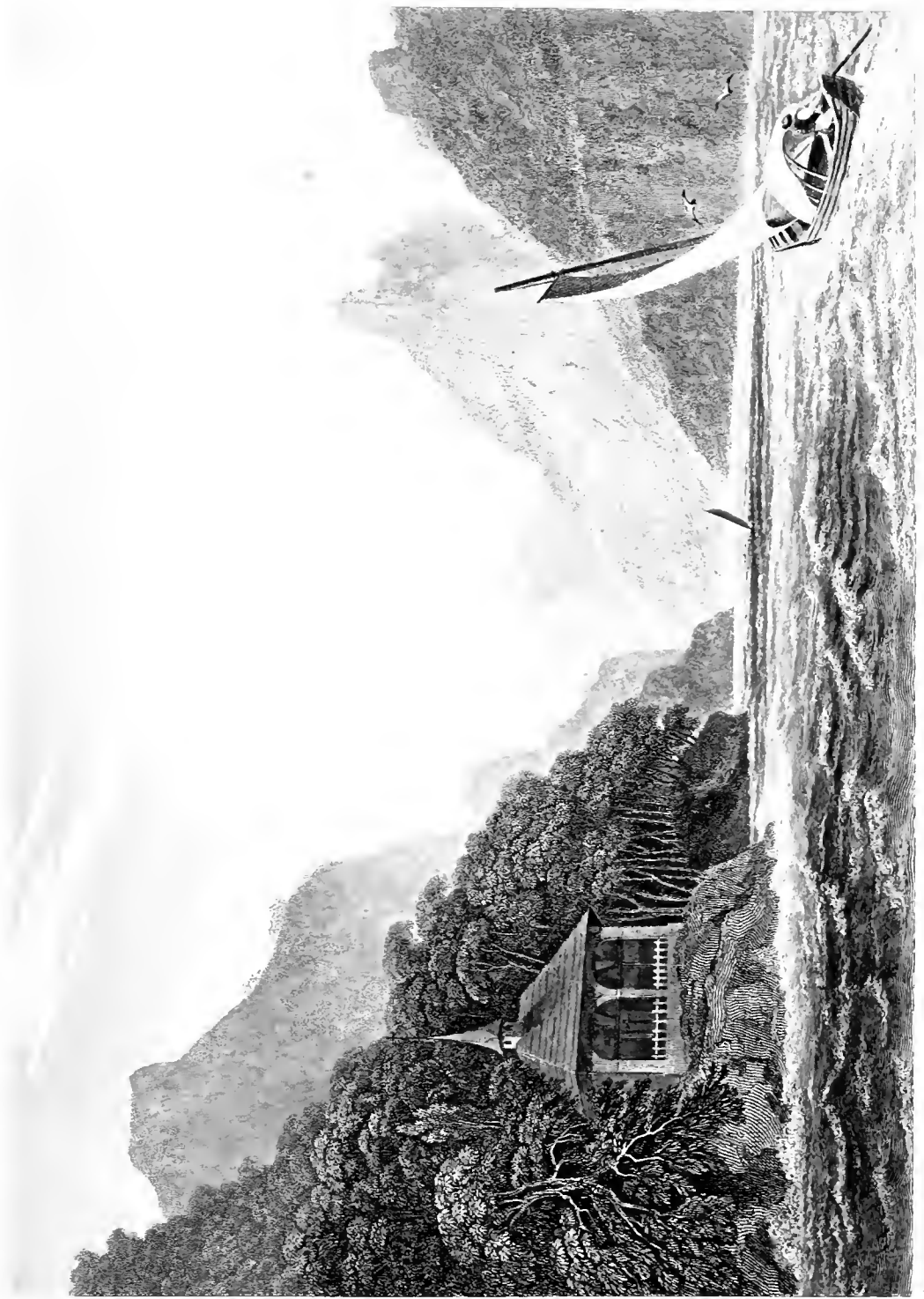
* End Vignette.

† Simond, in his interesting and generally accurate work on Switzerland, says, (vol. i. p. 192), that the floor of the chapel is not more than three feet above the water; and, as the chapel is never injured by the storms on the lake, asks his readers to form an estimate of such tempests. The floor of the chapel is more than twelve feet above the lake; and Simond seems to have forgotten his own comments upon Swiss boat-building, page 22 of the same volume. Certainly, if the bark of Gesler was like the wretched boats which now ply on the lake of the Waldstetten, a little storm would occasion great danger.



Drawn by W. Brockedon.

Engraved by



or the commercial intercourse between Italy and Switzerland, by the Saint Gothard, has greatly fallen off; certainly the intercourse has been lessened in consequence of the new roads by the Splugen and the Bernardin having offered greater facilities to merchants. The people of the Waldstetten have felt this, and it has induced them to decide upon completing the pass of the Saint Gothard as a carriage-road.

An impenetrable obscurity veils the early accounts of the pass of the Saint Gothard, and leaves it uncertain whether it was even in the country of the Lepontii. Cæsar, Pliny, Strabo, and Ptolemy, mention this people, but in terms so vague and contradictory, that modern authors are at a loss to draw even probable inferences from them. Cæsar and Ammianus say, that the Rhine rises in the country of the Lepontii; Strabo confounds these people with the Rhetii; Pliny states, that they border on the source of the Rhone; and Ptolemy writes of a town of the Lepontii in the Cottian Alps; but he also mentions Mount Adula, as another name by which the Lepontian Alps were known. Puzzled by these conflicting statements, some modern authors appear to have considered the pass of the Saint Gothard as a line of demarcation between the Rhetii and the Lepontii. The author, resting upon the authority of Simler, believes that the present pass of the Saint Gothard lay directly through the country of the Lepontii. The learned old Swiss appears to have investigated the subject with more tact and local knowledge than any other author. It is very probable, that the name of the Val Levantine has been derived from the Lepontians.

The early history of the passes of the Alps, by which the Cimbri and other early northern invaders descended into Italy, is as obscure as the geographical boundaries of their states. By many it has been considered that the hordes of barbarians which were defeated by Marius descended the Saint Gothard: it is probable that this was one of their passes; and in this opinion Denina follows Plutarch. But the numerous armies which descended from the north into Italy appear to have crossed

by the Rhetian, the Carnatic, and other Alps, as well as those of the Saint Gothard. There is less uncertainty in the direction which the Alemanni took in their invasion of Italy in the fifth century: as they were defeated by Majorian in the Campi Cannini, or valley of Bellinzona, it is highly probable that they descended by the pass of the Saint Gothard.*

The origin of the present name of this mountain, Saint Gothard, has been as perplexing as its early history: some, deriving it from the Celtic words *got* and *arth*, suppose that it owed its name to the worship of a divinity on this high mountain; others derive it from the Goths, who, when they were driven out of Italy, in the sixth century, established themselves in the valleys of the canton of Uri; but the most probable origin of the name is from a chapel dedicated to Saint Gothard, who was a bishop of Hildesheim in the twelfth century, in honour of whom the abbots of Dissentis raised a chapel on these heights, which were within their jurisdiction. What is known concerning this pass in the dark ages, has been preserved chiefly in the archives of the convent of Dissentis.

The truly heroic age of Switzerland was that in which the virtuous and patriotic leaguers delivered their country from the tyranny of the house of Hapsburg and the control of the empire, from 1308 to 1476. Soon after this period, the people of the Waldstetten, elated with their success, and conscious of their strength, began not only to embroil themselves in quarrels with their neighbours, but ultimately to hire themselves as soldiers to serve any foreign government, requiring little excitement to war and outrage beyond the hope of gain: they were always prepared to draw the sword for pay;† and when their services were purchased by contending parties, it sometimes happened

* Gibbon says by the Rhetian Alps, in a note expressive of his contempt for the degenerated Romans, who could boast of a victory over *nine hundred* barbarians.

† This mercenary feeling has yet too much encouragement, and still dishonours the Swiss. The author of this work, on his journey in Switzerland in 1825, passed, on the Lago Maggiore and the route of the Saint Gothard, many detachments of young recruits, part of a regiment raised in Switzerland for the service of Naples, and these were principally from the country of Tell! Other regiments are still found in the service of Ferdinand of Spain! in France, and in Germany.

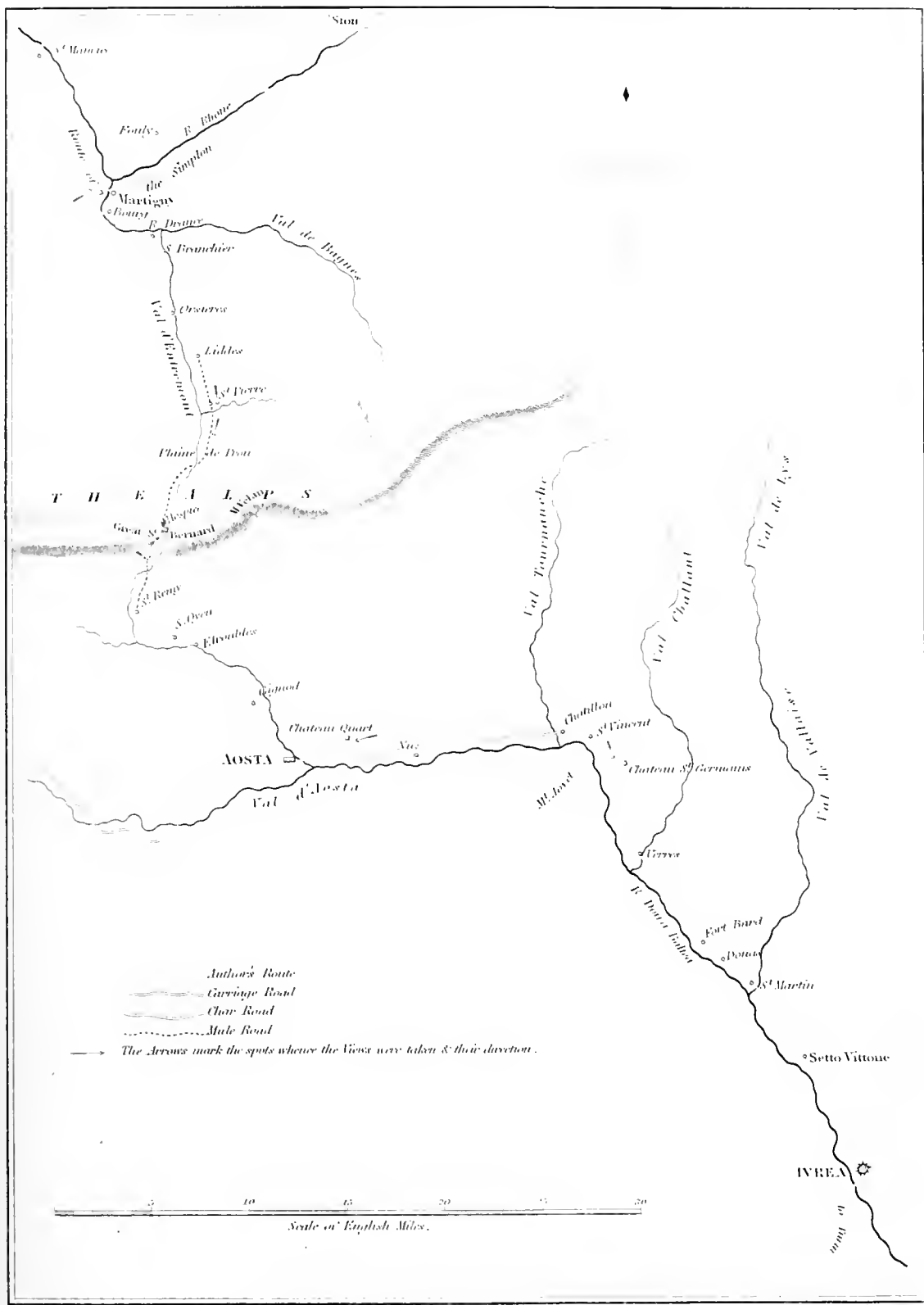
that Swiss were opposed to Swiss. About this period of their history, the passes of the Saint Gothard and the Val Levantine were often the scenes of their contests with the Milanese; but their character as invincible soldiers was destroyed at the battles of Marignano and Pavia; the charm was ended by which they had often conquered; and though their heroism was not less, they had suffered such repeated defeats, from soldiers as brave and well disciplined as themselves, that their blood was no longer worth the price which had been paid for it; and they returned defeated, and driven from an infamous course to the honourable employment of cultivating their soil. Three hundred years of peace followed; and, except the occasional employment of some regiments on foreign service, little is heard of the military history of the Swiss until the invasion of their hearths by the French at the end of the eighteenth century, when all that bravery and desperation could effect was done by them; but they sunk before the armies and the infamous policy of the French Directory. The sufferings which were inflicted upon the Swiss, and the miseries which they were compelled to endure during several campaigns, whilst their country was the seat of war and violence, harrow the feelings in the recital. A note of Comte Dumas, *sur l'Invasion de la Suisse*, in the *Précis des Evénemens Militaires*, too long for insertion here, should be read by every one interested in the history of Switzerland, as presenting an *exposé* of that infamous outrage by the French, which he has had the boldness, though a Frenchman, to record. At the very time when this outrage was perpetrated, and they were upon terms of amity with the Swiss, the Directory resolved upon "l'invasion d'une terre hospitalière, le dernier asile des mœurs antiques, le séjour favori de la liberté; et livrèrent à toutes les horreurs de la guerre un peuple, dont la franchise, la bravoure, et la loyauté, avaient été justement célébrées dans tous les temps." Simond, in his excellent sketch of this eventful period, in the second volume on Switzerland, gives the following from a narrator of some of the occurrences of that period in the Val

Levantine:—"Towards the end of October 1798, we were visited for the first time by foreign troops; a division of eight thousand French having passed the Saint Gothard, already covered with snow, appeared unexpectedly in the Levantina. We had no stock of provisions beyond what was necessary for our own subsistence during the approaching winter; yet were compelled to feed this multitude for a while, and permanently a garrison of three or four hundred men stationed at Airolo. Men and women, and all the cattle, were employed, without any salary, in transporting military stores during the whole winter. Early in March following, the passage of the whole army, penetrating into the Grisons, brought an increase of fatigue, losses, and dangers; and many perished." These poor people were sufferers whichever party was successful. Between the two they were spared by neither; their country was the seat of war for above three years, during which time they were compelled to endure loss of property, forced labour, and severe privation. They were stigmatized as rebels if they murmured, and punished if they resisted. Many abandoned for ever *this land of malediction*; others died of absolute want.

After the forcible possession of Switzerland by the French, she was governed by a constitution under the *Acte de Médiation*, subjected to the obligation of furnishing a large contingent of troops for the service of France. The self-elected *mediator* was Buonaparte, whose downfall was the signal for her delivery from the bondage of France. Since the restoration of the Helvetic diet, and the integrity of Switzerland as a nation, her policy has been directed to the organisation of her resources, and to guard against any future violation of her territory.



PASSES OF THE ALPS



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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUTE FROM MORTIGNY TO WREX BY THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.

ROUTE

FROM

MARTIGNY TO IVREA

BY THE

PASS OF THE GREAT SAINT BERNARD.

THERE is no passage of the Alps which affords to the traveller greater pleasure, either in the enjoyment or the recollection of his journey to Italy, than that by the Great Saint Bernard ; for besides the wildness of this Alpine pass, and the beauty of the valley of Aosta, through which the road to Turin continues after it leaves the mountains, the kind reception which he experiences from the religious community at the hospice, on the summit of the Saint Bernard, is remembered as long as he can be grateful for the devotion which induces these excellent men to offer to the traveller their welcome, and spread for him their hospitality in the wilderness.

The road which conducts to the Pennine Alps, or the Great Saint Bernard, from the valley of the Rhone, commences near the confluence of this river with the Drance, at Martigny, a town of importance in early history, as Octodurum, the capital of the Veragri, a people of the Valais, against whom Sergius Galba was sent by Julius Cæsar to check the outrages and robberies which they, together with the Nantuates who inhabited the valley below Saint Maurice, and the Seduni, a people of the Valais between Visp and Sion, committed upon the merchants who, even at this early period, traversed the Pennine Alps.*

* It is highly probable that the passage by the Great Saint Bernard was not the only one guarded by Galba, though Octodurum was his head-quarters in commanding the Pennine Alps ; for this name was given to the range of mountains from the Great Saint Bernard to the Simplon, which includes the passes from Italy into the Valais which are above the station of Galba, those of the Simplon and the Mont Moro. This Alpine pass lies between Visp in the Valais and the Val Anzasca in Piedmont, and the remains of an old road may be clearly traced over the Moro. The Val Anzasca

Bourrit says that the encampment of Galba may still be traced at Martigny, but this is uncertain and improbable, though numerous relics remain of the importance of Octodurum, when it was a Roman station. Upon the appointment of a Christian prelate in the Valais, in the fourth century, he bore the title of bishop of Octodurum. Two hundred years later the see was removed to Sion, but the title was continued. The subsequent history of the Valaisans presents few periods of relief from the outrages which were practised upon the people during the long struggle of the bishops of Sion for temporal power against the feudal lords of the Valais. The scene from the old castle of Martigny is very fine, particularly looking up the valley of the Rhone.* In this direction the view extends to the Mont Saint Gothard; down the valley the scene is bounded by the Jura, and in the direction of the mountains of the Great Saint Bernard, the eye commands the town of Martigny, and the estuary of the Drance.

To ascend to the pass of the Great Saint Bernard, it is necessary, after leaving the inn at Martigny, where travellers usually rest, to traverse the Bourg, a narrow dirty village about half a league distant. A little beyond this place the river Drance is crossed, and the road proceeds along its left bank. Soon after passing the river, a path on the right leads over the Forclaz to

was distinguished very early for its mines of iron, copper, and gold. Strabo and Pliny both mention the gold mines of the Ictymuli, whose locality the author thinks, though D'Anville and Cluverius place it in Upper Val Sesia, is preserved in the name of Pié de Muliera, a town at the entrance of the Val Anzasca, where the gold ore is reduced which is still raised in the mines of the valley. Pliny states that a law existed among the Ictymuli, which forbade their employing more than five thousand men in the gold mines; this is evidence of an important commerce in their valley, which probably led to frequent communication with the people of the Valais. Without admitting this it is difficult to understand why Galba should have attacked the Seduni as well as the Veragri, and have taken many of their forts. They could not have offered any interruption to travellers by the Great Saint Bernard, as they were a people of the Valais far above the valley of the Drance.

* Plate the First. The old castle, in a commanding situation above La Batia, the village near Martigny through which the route to the Simplon passes, was built by Pierre of Savoy, to command and oppress the wretched Valaisans, who were within the reach of his power. This château was subsequently possessed by the bishops of Sion, and the inhabitants of Martigny have horrible traditions associated with it. The round tower has a dungeon of great depth, with which there is no communication except through a hole in the stone floor above it; the heart recoils from the sound and emotion, which a stone dropped into it from the chamber above produces.



Engraved by W. H. B. & Co.

Chamouny. The road up the valley of the Drance rises high above the stream; but there is nothing interesting in this part of the route. After passing through the miserable village of Bouvernier, the road crosses the river, and descends to the bed of the valley; in one part this is so narrow, that a gallery has been cut in the rock, through which the road is continued. A little beyond this gallery, the river is again crossed near to where the thick walls of a house remain which the dreadful inundation of the Drance in 1818 did not entirely remove. These ruins stand there like an object of malediction. The height which the torrent obtained on that fearful occasion, is seen in the desolate and ruined state of the valley; vast blocks of stone, which were driven and deposited there by the force of that inundation, strew the valley, and sand and pebbles present an arid surface where rich pasturages were seen before the catastrophe. The quantity of the water suddenly discharged from the lake which had been formed, and the velocity of its descent, is a measure of force which it is difficult to conceive.*

At Saint Branchier, the route to the Great Saint Bernard leaves the valley of Bagnes and enters the Val d'Entremont, where the traveller is relieved by rich pasturages, from the desolation and dulness which have hitherto accompanied him from Martigny. At Orsiere, the first village in the Val d'Entremont, a path on the right leads to Carmayeur, by the Col de Ferret, and to the Great Saint Bernard, by the Col de Fenêtres. To continue the route by the Val d'Entremont, the river, called the Drance of Saint Bernard, is crossed, and the road ascends on the right bank to the next village, Liddes, which is half-way to the convent from Martigny. At Liddes refreshment may be had, the chars from Martigny are left, and mules are usually hired there to continue the journey to the Great Saint Bernard.†

* In half an hour five hundred and thirty millions of cubic feet of water passed through the breach in the dyke of ice and snow which formed the lake; in five times greater quantity, and with five times greater velocity, than the waters of the Rhine at Basle, where the river is one thousand three hundred English feet wide. Of this calamitous event the best account is by M. Escher de Lenth, published in the *Bib. Univ. de Genève Sci. et Arts*, tom. 8, p. 281.

† If the traveller merely visit the convent, he returns to Liddes the next day, and

Bourg Saint Pierre is a village of great antiquity, in proof of which numerous relics and inscriptions are preserved there.* A fine cascade in the neighbourhood is an object usually visited by travellers. On leaving the village, to ascend the valley, the road passes through an old gate† which is situated on the brink of a ravine of great depth, across which a bridge is thrown: its removal would render access to Saint Pierre extremely difficult on the side of the Great Saint Bernard. Beyond the village the valley assumes a character of wildness and savage grandeur. In the forest of Saint Pierre the path winds among old pines and larches, and over and between rocks, which prohibit all means of passing except to the foot of the traveller or his mule; and, beyond the forest, the plain of Prou is seen bounded by lofty mountains, glaciers, and the highest peak of the Saint Bernard, the Mount Velan;‡ the river passes at too great a depth beneath the traveller's feet to be heard, and the whole scene is silent and desolate. These narrow and rugged paths were the chief obstacles to the conveyance of the mounted artillery of the army of Napoleon in its extraordinary passage of this mountain in 1800.§

Soon after leaving the forest of Saint Pierre a few scattered and stunted larches mark the boundary of their vegetation, above these, the rhododendron holds the chief rank, but this ceases to struggle with the soil and temperature before it attains the elevation of the hospice. On traversing the plain de Prou, the glacier of Menoue which streams from Mount

resumes his char; if he proceed to Aosta, his mule is usually hired for Saint Remy, as another mule cannot be procured at the convent, except from the chance of one returning; it is, however, absolutely necessary for travellers from Liddes or Saint Remy, the two nearest stations to the convent, to take with them corn or hay, as these articles are too carefully preserved for the mules of necessitous travellers in winter, to be furnished from the stores of the convent at a favourable season. When mules are not thus provided, they are always sent for the night to the nearest station, usually Saint Remy, on the side of Piedmont.

* Among these is a military column dedicated to the younger Constantine, which, de Rivaz says, replaced a statue of Jupiter that was on the summit of the pass of the Great Saint Bernard, but which was destroyed by Constantine about the year 339.

† End Vignette.

‡ Plate the Second.

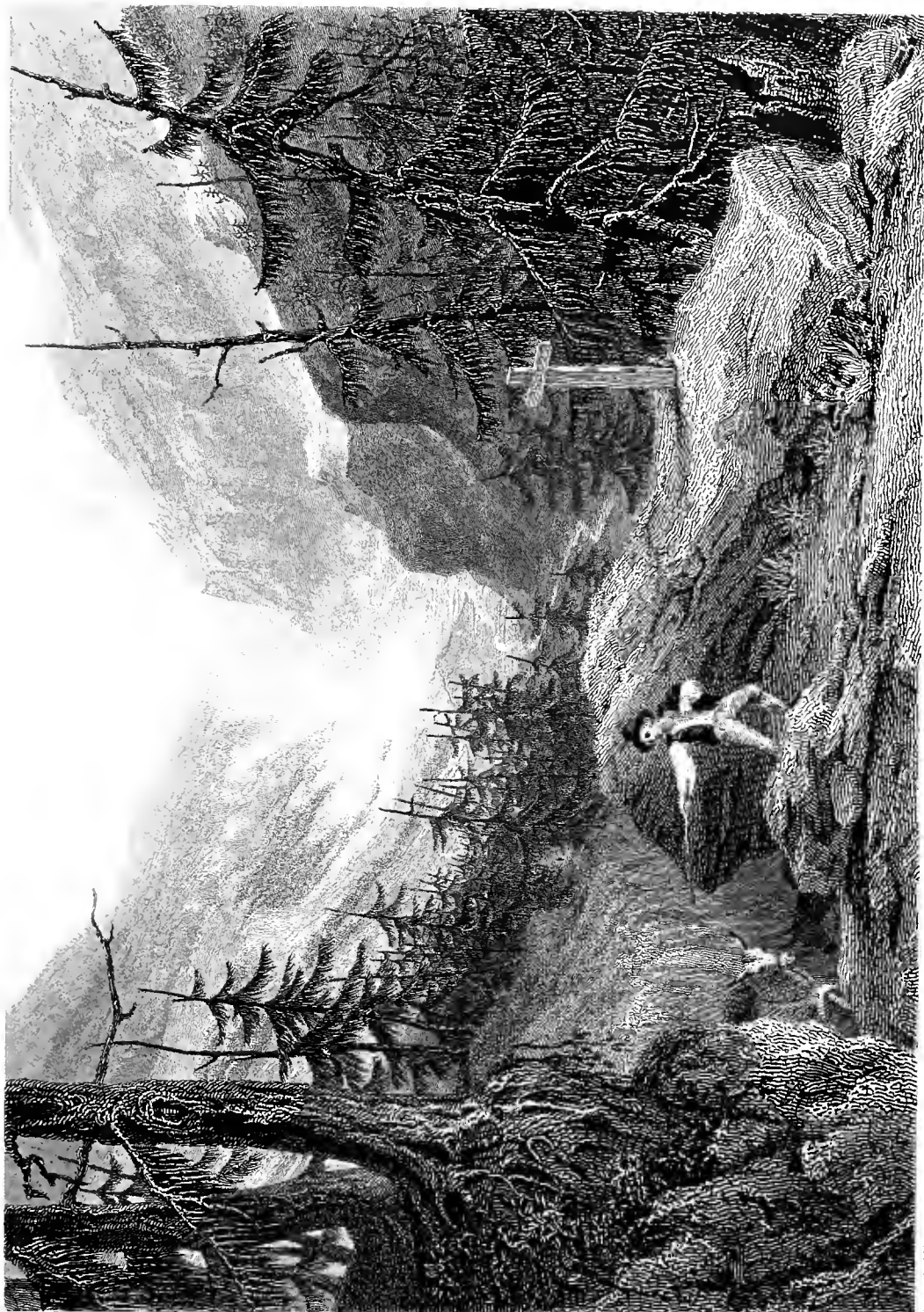
§ Of that great event, one incident, in which Napoleon had a narrow escape, may be mentioned here: in a dangerous part of the road, near the termination of the forest of Saint Pierre, he slipped from his mule on the snow, but he was saved from falling over by his guide, who caught him by the coat, and thus preserved him. The guide, who was a peasant, was rewarded with a thousand francs.



Drawn by W. Brockedon

Engraved by E. T. de

THE END OF THE WORLD



Velan is a fine object. Beyond the plain of Prou, the valley is ascended by a steep and dangerous path where the traveller is exposed to avalanches during the winter and spring. It is here that many of the victims to the storms of these regions are found, and two châteaux have been built, the one to shelter the living, the other as a receptacle for the dead. These châteaux are called l'hôpital. This spot is regularly visited in the dangerous season, by the brethren of the convent, their servants, or their dogs, to search for and assist unfortunate travellers, and to leave some refreshment at one of the châteaux.

Before arriving at the convent, the traveller recrosses the river on the Pont de Nudri, and then ascending by an abrupt path traverses a bed of snow, which few seasons are favourable enough to melt; here the roof of the convent is visible, and in ten minutes he receives the cheerful and welcome reception of the monks of Saint Bernard at their dwelling in the clouds,* where they exercise a general hospitality without regard to the religion or the country of those whom they assist, and voluntarily engage themselves, by vow, to devote their lives to the succour of those who traverse the desert which they inhabit. The convent is massive, strong, and adapted to its perilous situation, on the very crest of the passage, where it is exposed to tremendous storms from the north-east and south-west; in other directions it is sheltered by the mountains Chenelletaz and Mont-Mort, for the name of Saint Bernard, like that of the Saint Gothard, is given to the passage, and not to any particular mountain. The chief building is capable of accommodating sixty or eighty travellers with beds; three hundred may be assisted and sheltered, and between five and six hundred persons have received assistance in one day. Besides the chief building, there is a house on the other side of the road which is generally used as an establishment for the domestics.†

* The convent is situated eight thousand two hundred English feet above the level of the sea.

† This house is of modern construction, it was built as a place of refuge in case of fire, which had twice already happened since the foundation, and to receive greater numbers than the convent could before accommodate. It bears the name of the Hôtel de Saint Louis, which was given in compliment to the kings of France, whose protection had often been extended to this establishment.

The entrance to the convent is attained by a flight of steps leading to what may be considered the first floor, which is better adapted for access in the winter, when the snow not only lies seven or eight feet deep around the convent, but often the drifts rise nearly to the roof. The ground-floor is used for stables, and store-rooms for wood, &c. The entrance at the steps leads by a corridor to various offices, and on the floor above, another corridor communicates with the refectory, the separate chambers of the religieux, and extensive accommodations for travellers, in which the neatness and comfort of the arrangements add greatly to an Englishman's enjoyment of his reception. One chamber is devoted to visitors, which may be considered the *drawing-room* of the establishment; it has its elegancies,—a piano-forte, books, prints, and pictures, which have been presented by travellers. A cabinet is attached to this chamber, which contains collections made by the monks, of the plants and minerals of the Great Saint Bernard, and many relics from the ruins of the temple of Jupiter on this mountain; these consist of votive tablets and figures, in bronze and other metals; arms, and coins,—among these there is a gold coin of Lysimachus in fine preservation. The eastern ends of the corridors communicate with the chapel, where conventual service is regularly performed.*

Strangers are generally surprised upon their arrival at the convent, by the youth of the religieux; not a member of the community, consisting of twelve or fourteen, who reside at the convent, appears to have attained the age of forty: they enter upon their duties at eighteen, and vow a devotion of fifteen years to active benevolence in these dreary regions, where but few are robust enough to accomplish their vows and endure the severity of the winters,† without feeling its effects in broken

* In the chapel is a monument of Desaix, who fell at Marengo; it was placed here by order of Buonaparte, and the medal which was struck in commemoration, records that he laid the first stone.

† In the summer of 1816 the ice of the lake on the summit of the Great Saint Bernard never melted, and not a week passed without snow falling. The severest cold recorded was twenty-nine degrees below zero of Fahrenheit, it has often been observed at eighteen and twenty degrees below: the greatest heat has been sixty-eight degrees of Fahrenheit, but in the height of summer it always freezes early in the morning.



constitutions and ruined health. The religious order of the monks of Saint Bernard is that of Saint Augustine.*

Visitors universally acknowledge the kind and courteous attention which they receive from these excellent men, particularly at table; they are freely communicative respecting their establishment, and conversation has no restraint but in the respect which their characters demand. The language used by them is French, though there are Italians and Germans among them; they are well informed upon most subjects, and intelligent upon those in which their situation has been favourable to their acquiring information. The periodical works of some academic bodies and institutions are sent to them, and they have a small library which is chiefly theological. During their short summer, their intercourse with well-informed travellers is extensive; this gives to their inquiries a propriety, and an apparent interest in the affairs of the world. A report had prevailed that the funds of the convent had suffered much upon the fall of Buonaparte, who had especially patronised the establishment. In reply to inquiry upon the subject, the prior informed the author, that their funds were in a flourishing condition, that Napoleon rather impoverished than enriched them; it was true that he had assisted them with donations, but his claims upon their funds had exceeded these benefits, that they had had forty men quartered upon them for months together, and sixty thousand had passed in one season, and all these had been assisted. Their funds, he said, from the facilities which peace gave to travelling, were now increasing, as visitors to the convent, who can afford it, are usually donors; the money is always dropt into a box in the chapel, and is rarely less than the parties would have been called upon to pay at an inn.

Under every circumstance in which it is possible to render assistance, the worthy religieux of Saint Bernard set out upon their

* The distinguishing badge in their costume is a very narrow white band or scarf, which by a slit is passed round the neck, and the ends are put before and behind within a girdle which goes round the waist. The dress is a black cloth robe which reaches nearly to the ankle, and buttons in front from top to bottom, a black conical cap with a tuft at the top completes the costume, which is gentlemanly and becoming.

fearful duty, unawed by the storm, and obeying a higher power; they seek the exhausted or overwhelmed traveller, generally accompanied by their dogs, whose sagacity will often detect the victim, though buried in the snow. The dogs also, as if conscious of a high duty, will roam alone through the day and night in these desolate regions, and if they discover an exhausted traveller, will lie on him to impart warmth, and bark or howl for assistance.* The system of purveyance for the hospice appears to be well regulated; supplies come from Aosta and the

* Sometimes the members or domestics of the convent have been sufferers in their efforts to save others. On the 17th of December, 1825, three domestics of the convent, with two dogs, descended to the vacherie, on the Piedmontese side of the mountain, and were returning with a traveller, when an avalanche overwhelmed them. All perished except one of the dogs, which escaped by its prodigious strength, after having been thrown over and over. Of the poor victims, none were found until the snow of the avalanche had melted in the returning summer, when the first was discovered on the 4th of June, and the last on the 7th of July. One of these unfortunates was Victor, a fine old domestic, whom the author well remembers on his first visit to the convent in 1824. There is one scene of melancholy interest usually visited on the Saint Bernard—the *morgue*, or receptacle for the dead. It is a low building a few yards from the eastern extremity of the convent, where the bodies of the unfortunate victims to storms and avalanches in these mountains have been placed. They have generally been found frozen, and put into this horrid receptacle in the posture in which they perished. Here many have “dried up and withered,” and on some even the clothes have remained after eighteen years; others present a horrid aspect, some of the bones of the head being blanched and exposed, whilst black integuments still attach to parts of the face. Among the latest victims were a mother and child. The air passed freely through the grated windows, without bearing to the nostrils of the observer the foul evidence of its transition through this dreadful place. From the rapid evaporation at this height, the bodies had dried without the usual decay. In a walled enclosure on one side of the *morgue* was a great accumulation of bones, white, broken, and apparently the gathering of centuries. Upon this rocky and frozen soil they could not bury the dead, and probably, as they dry up without offence, they are placed here for the chance of recognition. Some additions to this sepulchre are annually made, for the perilous passage by this route during the winter is more frequently undertaken than is generally imagined; many are prompted by the necessity or urgency of their affairs, at this season, to traverse the mountain; they are generally pedlars and smugglers, who travel in defiance of storms and avalanches. In these high regions the snow forms and falls in small particles which congeal so soon and so hard, that they do not attach and form flakes in descending; and instead of consolidating beneath the pressure of the feet of the traveller, the snow rises around him like powder, and he sinks to his middle: whirlwinds, called *tourmentes*, raise the snow in dust; unable then to discover his path, he falls over some precipice. The avalanches, too, have numerous victims; those of spring are occasioned by the submelting of the snow, which undermines their support. The winter avalanches are produced by the accumulations of snow on the steep sides of the mountains, which, having little cohesion, at length become heavy enough to exceed the supporting power, when enormous masses slide off into the valleys beneath, with a suddenness and violence which the prior at the convent compared to the discharge of a cannon-ball; these render the approach to the hospice, particularly on the side of the Valais, very dangerous.

neighbouring villages. Wood for firing is one of the most important articles, as not a stick grows within a league and a half, and all the wood which is supplied to the convent is brought from the forest of Ferret, a distance of nearly four leagues.* The scene from the western end of the hospice, looking towards Italy, is sterile and dreary; patches of snow are seen on the sides of the mountains, which sweep down to the lake; and the *Pain de Sucre*, a pinnacled mountain on the other side of the vacherie, with its rocks and snows, add to the wildness and desolation.† A column, opposite to the middle of the water, marks the boundary of Piedmont and the Valais; above and beyond it, is the little plain of Jupiter, where a temple formerly stood,‡ and from which a Roman road led down on the Piedmontese side of the pass. This road may be easily traced in the hewn rock, and the remains of a massive pavement, but not a vestige of the temple is left above the surface. The name of this mountain, or rather of this range of the *Pennine* Alps, is generally admitted to be of Celtic origin, from *pen* or *penn*, a height,§ and not from the Pœni, who crossed the Alps with

* The consumption of wood is considerable, for at the great elevation of the hospice, water boils at about one hundred and ninety degrees, which is so much less favourable for the concoction of meat than at two hundred and twelve degrees, that it requires nearly five hours to effect that, which, at the higher temperature, may be done in three hours. Some saving has been lately effected in the economy of their fires, by conducting hot air in tubes through the convent.

† Plate the Third.

‡ The period of the foundation of the temple of Jupiter, which was formerly on the summit, is unknown; but many of the bronze votive tablets, which have been found in its ruins, appear to be of great antiquity; they were placed in the temple and on the altars by travellers, in gratitude for escape from perils in their journey across these Alps; some are inscribed to Jupiter, others to the god Penninus. This difference probably arose from the nation of the devotee, for when the Romans became acquainted with this pass, the worship of Jupiter for that of Penninus was a change only in name, and Penninus was preserved with that of Jupiter long after the Romans had extended their conquests beyond these Alps. The religion, if not the temple, had long been established upon these heights; from the fragments, however, which have been found in the temple, it appears to have been a Roman work of a time probably not earlier than that of Augustus. The period of the substitution of a military column for the statue of Jupiter, under the younger Constantine, in the year 339, was probably not that of the destruction of the temple, for medals of the children of Theodosius, fifty years later, have been found there. It has been conjectured by Chretien de Loges, in his "*Essais Historiques sur le Mont Bernard*," that it was destroyed by the Huns and Vandals during their ravages, for it was not in existence when the Lombards passed the Alps in 574.

§ This term is still preserved in Cornwall and Wales, as *Pendennis*, *Penmaenmawr*.

Hannibal. The territories of the Veragri extended to the summit of this pass, which was the barrier between them and the Salassi, a people of the Val d'Aosta. On this mountain, Livy states that the Veragri worshipped a god of the Alps, Penninus, or Jupiter Penninus, and one of the earliest names for this passage of the Alps, was Mons Jovis, or Mons Jovis Penninus; this was Gallicised into Mont Joux, by which it was generally known before it acquired that of Saint Bernard.

The first foundation of the hospice has been attributed by some to Louis the Debonnaire, by others to Charlemagne, whose uncle *Bernard*, an illegitimate son of Charles Martel, led a division of the invading army of Charlemagne over the Great Saint Bernard, when he went to attack Lombardy. The present name of the pass, Saussure supposes, might have been derived from this *Bernard*; but there was another of the name, an illegitimate son of Pepin, to whom Charlemagne left the kingdom of Italy. To him may rather be attributed the original establishment of the hospice, from the interest which he would have in preserving the communication with Gaul by this passage of the Alps, and with it have given his name, for there is historical evidence that a monastery existed on the Great Saint Bernard before the year 851;* but its history at this period is obscure, because in the year 890 it was devastated by Arnaud, who destroyed the monuments and records.

The present hospice was founded in 962, by Bernard, who was born of a noble family of Savoy, at the château of Menthon, on the Lake of Annecy. A determination at an early age to devote himself to an ecclesiastical life induced him to desert his home and go to Aosta, of which city he afterwards became archdeacon. A coincidence of his name with that of the monastery probably influenced his determination to re-establish

* Simler mentions that Hartmann, abbé and almoner of Mont Joux, who was made at that time bishop of Lausanne, had been chief of the monastery. De Rivaz mentions even an earlier abbé of this convent, Vultgaire, in 832; and the annals of Bertin state, that Lothaire the Second, king of Lorraine, in 859, made a treaty with his brother, the emperor, Louis the Second, by which he ceded to him Geneva, Lausanne, and Sion, but reserved particularly *l'hôpital du Saint Bernard*, which proves, says Saussure, the importance of this passage, and the name which it bore.

the hospice on Mont Joux, of which he became the chief. He founded at nearly the same time the hospice on the Little Saint Bernard, and gave to them the name, and placed them under the protection, of his favourite saint, Nicolas de Myre, as tutelary patron of these establishments; by degrees the name of the devotee was joined to that of the saint, and after the canonization of Bernard, his name superseded that of all others, and has continued attached to the hospice since 1123. The attempt of Constantine to destroy the worship of Jupiter had not entirely succeeded, but Saint Bernard rooted out the remains of paganism, and founded an establishment for active benevolence to which thousands have been indebted. He died in 1008, after having governed the convent upwards of forty years. For some time after the death of Saint Bernard, the hospice was exposed to frequent outrages, from barbarians who traversed the mountains; and its records of the eleventh century present a succession of calamities. The Saracens overran the country, carrying fire and sword into the Alpine valleys; the monastery of Mont Joux was burnt, and its ruins became a station of brigands who plundered or exacted an exorbitant payment from all passengers through a barrier which they established at the south-west extremity of the lake. The Normans having determined to expel these marauders, broke down the barriers, and killed the guard. Still outrages continued; and Canute, king of England and Denmark, among others, complained to the pope and the emperor of the horrors and violence committed in the Alps upon his subjects going on pilgrimages to Rome, who seldom ventured to traverse these mountains, unless in companies of four or five hundred. His complaints were regarded, the tolls of the passage were abolished, and Canute, in consequence, wrote to his bishops and prelates, informing them, that he had secured the safety of the pilgrims in the route of the Pennine Alps. The brigands were driven out; good order succeeded to outrage, and the convent was re-established.* It soon

* In the contests of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa with Pope Alexander III., and Humbert, Count of Maurienne, diplomas of protection were given by them to the convent, for the security of persons and property belonging to the monastery. It was

acquired great celebrity and opulence. As early as 1177 it had, in various diocesses, eighty-eight benefices, in priories, cures, châteaux, and farms; it had lands in Sicily, in Flanders, and in England. Its climax of riches and importance was in 1480, when it possessed ninety-eight cures alone. Subsequently, however, the Reformation, political changes in the states, loss of distant property, disputes with the popes, with the neighbouring states, and with each other, drove the monks of Saint Bernard to seek even eleemosynary assistance. The very land upon which their noble duties are performed has been the subject of disputes between the neighbouring states. Sardinia claimed it as within a frontier extending to the bridge of Nudri, on the northern side; but the Valaisans established a claim to it as within the diocess of Sion, by bulls of the popes from Leo IX. to Benoit XIV. The hospice, therefore, stands within the canton of the Valais; but its authority extends only to the middle of the lake, on the borders of which a column is fixed as a line of demarcation; and the excellent brethren of Saint Bernard had not only all their property within the state of Sardinia taken from them, but they are actually taxed by this state for the use which they make of the summer pasturage of the vacherie. Very little property in land still belongs to the hospice; a vineyard at Clarens,* and a farm at Roche, in the Pays de Vaud, are the principal: these resources are small, and in aid of them collections are regularly made in the Swiss cantons, but this has been sometimes abused by impostors who have collected as the agents of the hospice.

On leaving the convent to descend to the valley of Aosta, the route lies on the borders of the lake, below a path which

one of the very few objects in which emperors, sovereign pontiffs, and other distinguished persons, disputed the glory of fostering and protecting a foundation so important to humanity.

* The 22d note of the Third Canto of *Childe Harold* contains, to the disgrace of Lord Byron, a sneer at the establishment on the Saint Bernard, for having, he says, cut down the "Bosquet de Julie"—"with brutal selfishness, that the ground might be inclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition;" he would thus, for the sake of Rousseau, set the worthlessness of this "Bosquet" against the utility and value of a vineyard, the most valuable sort of property near the lake of Geneva, which was to be employed so entirely in the service of humanity!



Illustration by W. H. Jackson

on the right hand leads to the plain of Jupiter. At the extremity of the lake, the road overhangs a stream which issues from it. At this point a traveller from Aosta first catches a view of the hospice, buried in a defile formed by the mountains which rise high above the passage, and closed in the back-ground by Mont Velan.* On leaving this rocky barrier the road turns abruptly to the right, and sweeps far round to obtain a gradual descent to the vacherie, the pasturage above Saint Remy; the scene is wild, barren, and extensive, and bounded by the lofty summits of the mountains on the southern side of the valley of Aosta, it is greatly exposed to storms, but the contrasts which arise from the weather in Alpine scenes, is striking; sometimes, but rarely, it is bright and cloudless, at others, the clouds lie beneath the traveller's station, reposing like a zone on the mountain, or midway overhanging the valleys, presenting the appearance of a tranquil lake.† Masses of snow, which are rarely melted, lie on the side of the Mont-Mort, and fill the ravines and fissures of the vast basin which forms the vacherie; over these masses of snow the fearless peasants descend with great swiftness and safety to the châteaux, a transit which saves half an hour in the descent.‡

* Title Vignette.

† Plate the Fourth.

‡ It was from this slope that the avalanche descended which overwhelmed poor Victor and his unfortunate companions. It was also down those beds of snow, much more extensive in May, the season of his passage, that Napoleon slid with his soldiers, boldly following the example of some of his troops and encouraging the army, which had encountered so much difficulty and danger, in its march across these Alps, from the 13th to the 20th of May, 1800; when such an attempt was fraught with danger from the exposure of the army to avalanches, which in the spring fall frequently in the narrow and most dangerous parts of the route. The passage of the army under such circumstances, with its artillery and material, is one of the most stupendous military events on record. Under the directions of General Marmont, who commanded the artillery, and Gassendi, the inspector of the ordnance, the cannon were dismounted and placed in hollow trunks of trees, and thus dragged up the steep and dangerous ascents by one half of a battalion, whilst the other half carried their own and their comrades' arms and accoutrements, with provisions for five days. The gun-carriages and ammunition wagons were taken to pieces, placed on mules, and thus conveyed across the mountain. The soldiers were often obliged to walk in single file, and when the head of a column rested, it checked those behind; availing themselves of the halt, the soldiers refreshed themselves with biscuits steeped in melted snow, then again advancing, they beguiled their labour and renewed their energies under the inspiration of national songs.

From the vacherie a safe and easy path leads down to Saint Remy, where chars may be procured for Aosta. The route below Saint Remy is dull and uninteresting, through Saint Oyen and Etroubles; and except a fine peep into the Val Pellina, from near Gignod, the traveller descends to Aosta without passing any scene that can interest him. Aosta, formerly Augusta Prætoria, is a place of great antiquity, and was known as Cordele, the chief city of the Salassi,* who possessed the valley of Aosta.

The journey from Aosta to Chatillon lies through the most beautiful part of the valley, it abounds with fine forests and old châteaux in romantic situations. One of these, the Château Quart, a league from Aosta, is seen amidst the woods on the northern side of the valley; from it the scene looking towards Aosta is very beautiful.† There are few of the castellated ruins, with which this part of the valley abounds, which will not repay the traveller for the trouble of attaining them, their situations are so commanding and beautiful. Nuz and several other picturesque villages are passed on the road to Chatillon, a town surrounded by magnificent scenery; it is entered over a bridge of a single arch across a deep ravine, through which the torrent passes, which descends by the Val Tournanche, from Mont Cervin, to fall a little below Chatillon into the Doire. Soon after leaving Chatillon the traveller passes through the village of Saint Vincent, near to which there is a mineral spring, and below it in the road, there is a

* This people was conquered in the seven hundred and twenty-eighth year of Rome, by Terentius Varro, a general of Augustus; he reduced the city to ashes, and turned the stream of the Batier, which descends from the Great Saint Bernard, into the subterranean retreats of the Salassi, and captured forty-four thousand; of these eight thousand were sold at Ivrea. Three thousand soldiers, drawn from the prætorian cohorts, were stationed there; and the city, after the return of Augustus from Gaul, was rebuilt and called Augusta Prætoria. Many Roman remains attest its former importance, and among these a triumphal arch, which was erected in honour of Augustus, and in commemoration of his conquests of the people of the Alps. Time has destroyed an inscription which was on the architrave, but the arch is still in tolerable preservation. Aosta was erected into a bishopric early in the seventh century; in 1093 its seat was occupied by the notorious and haughty Saint Anselm, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury.

† Plate the Fifth.



The Great Hall, W. J. & Co. London.

bridge called the Pont de Sarrasins of singular form thrown over a gorge, whence the view up the valley towards Chatillon and the Château d'Usselle is very fine. A little below the bridge the valley narrows to a defile, formed by the base of Mont Jovet, and the road, which turns abruptly to the right, is cut like a lateral furrow out of the rock, which in many places overhangs the road, whilst towards the ravine, it is guarded by a wall, beneath which the torrent of the Doire rushes at a frightful depth. Above the road on the left is the château of Saint Germain.* The road through this defile, thus cut out of the precipitous side of the rocks, was an early work of the Romans, but subsequently widened and improved, at a great expense, by the monks of Saint Bernard, to facilitate the communication with their mountains, the access to the mineral springs of the valley, and the baths of Courmayeur. An inscription cut in the rock records this service.

About a league and a half below the defile of Mont Jovet, is the town of Verres, thence the road continues along the banks of the Doire, and among scenes of great richness and beauty to Fort Bard, where the valley narrows rather suddenly, and the course of the river is through a gorge formed by vast rocks which block up the valley, and renders Fort Bard a military position of great strength.†

* Plate the Sixth.

† When the army of Italy, on its way from the passage of the Great Saint Bernard, to reap the laurels of Marengo, arrived at Fort Bard, it was checked by an Austrian garrison of four hundred men. The strength of the position may be conceived by the number placed there to defend it. This check, if effectual, would have been fatal to the French army; its rations would have been exhausted in a few days, and sufficient supplies by the Great Saint Bernard were hopeless. Buonaparte's impatience and inquietude were excessive. He ordered an assault, the town was entered, but the street terraced out of the rock, through which the route lay, was commanded almost within pistol-shot by the fort. The most daring attempts by the French grenadiers to take the fort were defeated, and an attempt to pass without silencing the batteries would have been certain destruction. During this affair, however, a party of fifteen hundred men, though exposed to the fire of the fort, had climbed the rocks and precipices of the Albaredo, a mountain above the town, and succeeded in conveying, but with incredible danger and difficulty, a four-pounder to the point of a rock, which commanded the fort, where it was successful in checking the battery which annoyed the troops in this ascent. Generals Berthier and Marmont now prepared for passing through the town with the main army by night; litter was strewn in the street, and

The descent from Fort Bard to Donas is short but steep, and cut out of the rock as at the defile of Mont Jovet, an arch of rock which has been cut through, a Roman work, still remains. This part of the road is one of the points of evidence which has been strongly urged in support of the opinion that Hannibal passed by the Great Saint Bernard. The tradition is preserved among the inhabitants that Hannibal passed through this valley, and some early historians state that an inscription on the side of this road cut in the rock was seen by them. Luitprand, a bishop of Cremona, in the tenth century, says, that he saw entire *TRANSITUS ANNIBALIS*; and Paul Jovius says, that "there are letters shewn, which are engraved upon the rocks at Barr, a monument of Hannibal having passed that way." Such an inscription no longer exists, but if this evidence be satisfactory of the passage of Hannibal here, it by no means confirms his passage by the Great Saint Bernard, for it applies with equal force to the passage of the Little Saint Bernard, which also leads into Italy by the Val d'Aosta. From Donas the road descends to Saint Martins, a town surrounded by high rocks, and where a bold and lofty arch crosses the torrent which descends from the Monte Rosa by the Val de Lys. Here the valley of Aosta may be said to terminate; the mountains lower, the hills slope down into the plains of Italy; and, after passing through Setto Vittone, the traveller arrives at Ivrea, whence roads branch off to Milan and to Turin.

the wheels of the cannon and wagons were bound with hay-bands, to deaden the sound of their passage. A party of soldiers had succeeded in raising a gun into the belfry of a church which commanded one of the gates of the fort. With the darkness the march began, but the wary enemy opened a tremendous and destructive fire. Each gun of the French army was drawn by fifty soldiers, who passed beneath the shot, grenades, and *pots de feu* of the Austrians, with as much silence and speed as possible. Fortunately the gun in the belfry was so efficiently served, that it destroyed the gate of the fort, which it commanded; and the Austrians, fearing an immediate assault at that point, surrendered.



The Great North-Western Road.



[illegible]

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROUT FROM BOZENA TO MALLA BY THE MOUNT STILLO.

1894-1895

ROUTE

FROM

BOTZEN TO MILAN,

BY

THE PASS OF THE MONTE STELVIO.

THE great military road over the Monte Stelvio, by which the Emperor of Austria has recently opened, across the Alps, a new line of communication between his German and his Italian states, is a work of great political importance, as it will enable him, in case of necessity, to descend directly upon Milan, without violating the territory or infringing the privileges of any other government in his line of march.

From Vienna, two roads communicate with Milan by the Stelvio : one of these leads by Salzburg, Inspruck, and the Oberinn-thal, to Nauters, and thence by Mals to Prad ; the other by Clagenfurt, and through the Puster-thal, enters the route from Botzen to Inspruck at Brixen, and thence, after descending the road to Botzen, turns into the upper valley of the Adige, ascends by Meran, and crossing the river by the bridge of Spandinig, falls into the other road by the Oberinn-thal at Prad. From Prad the new road is led by the base of that gigantic mountain of the Tyrol, the Ortler-spitz, to traverse the Alps at the pass of the Stelvio, thence it descends to Bormio, and, after following the course of the Adda through the Valteline to Colico, on the lake of Como, sweeps along the shores of the lake to Lecco. From this

place two roads branch off to Milan; the one by Monza, the other by Erba and Como.

The new road is not less interesting to the engineer than to the politician. The great height to which it was necessary to carry the road, the summit of the passage being 9091 English feet above the level of the sea,—the nature of the ground over which it has been constructed, and the narrow and dangerous defiles, now sheltered by galleries, beneath which the traveller passes in safety,—presented difficulties to the engineer at least as great as those which opposed the construction of the routes made by the order of Napoleon. For the accomplishment of this splendid undertaking, a credit, not less than that which was awarded to the merit of M. Ceard, the engineer of the Simplon, is due to Signor Carlo Donegani, the engineer of the Stelvio; though his labours will be less permanent, from the nature of the road and its exposure to destruction, particularly in the spring, when the masses of rock, which are loosened by frost, or detached by avalanches from the mountains which bound the Pass of the Stelvio, sweep across the zig-zag terraces of the upper part of the road.

The scenery throughout the route from Botzen to Milan, which the author now proposes to illustrate, is rich and varied, abounding in the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque, from the glaciers of the Ortler-Spitz to the shores of the lake of Como, and through the rich valleys of the Adige and the Adda.

Botzen is situated in the former valley, near the confluence of the Eisach and the Adige, in a little plain of great fertility, where, beneath the shelter of surrounding mountains, the pomegranate ripens, and the fruits of northern Italy abound. In ascending the vale of the Adige to Meran, the richness of the country, and the luxuriant productiveness of the soil, cannot fail to attract the attention of the traveller; and the old castles, so common in the Tyrol, are in no part of it



Drawn by W. D. J. (1840)



more numerous. Almost every rock which projects into the valley is surmounted with this evidence of the baronial power of the Middle Ages.

Meran is delightfully situated on the river Passer, near to its confluence with the Adige, and seems nooked into the angle which is here formed in the valley of the Adige. Botzen lies S.S.E. below Meran; whilst the road through the valley above this town is continued nearly west: thus backed on the north and east by lofty mountains, its little territory is one of the richest in the valley. In the immediate neighbourhood of Meran is the village of Tyrol, which gives its name to the country; it is seen, on the approach to Meran, overhanging the valley, and it well deserves the sacrifice of an hour to enjoy the views presented from its site. After climbing the richly wooded side of the hill, and through vineyards and pastures, the traveller attains the village; but the ground behind the old castle is the spot which well repays him for the trouble of getting there. Beneath him is spread out the beautiful valley from Meran to Botzen, which is bounded in the horizon by the mountains beyond Trent; and on the right the upper valley rises to where the vista terminates in the mountains of the Ortler-Spitz.*

From Tyrol the traveller can descend to the high road, and proceed up the valley without returning to Meran; and from a part of the road, where it skirts a ravine, a little beyond the path from Tyrol, the view looking back upon Meran and Tyrol is very fine.

The ascent of the valley continues with little variety; the scenes are generally beautiful, and the picturesque is often aided by the ruins of feudal castles. The road passes beneath one of these, which frowns immediately over the village of Gastenbell.† A little beyond this castle the route crosses the Adige to its right bank, and, after passing through Latsch,

* Plate the First.

† End Vignette.

recrosses the river to Schlanders. Above this town the height of the valley is perceptible in the character of its vegetation, though its productions are still rich and abundant. The traveller passes numerous villages before he arrives at the bridge of Spandinig, where he enters upon the road from the Oberinn-thal by Mals: this bridge, which is one of the works of the new route by the Stelvio, and constructed of wood, is of great length, and for military purposes may be wide enough, but for commercial ones it is certainly too narrow.* The bridge is, in fact, only nine feet wide, though it is three hundred feet long: it is difficult to understand the policy or economy of this disproportion. From the southern side of the bridge the route passes directly off towards the mountains, and, after traversing a little plain, enters the deep valley which leads to the base of the Ortler-Spitz. At a short distance from the bridge of Spandinig is the village of Prad, where few accommodations are yet provided for travellers, though they are necessary from the situation of this village, where the day's journey of those who pass the Stelvio, commences or terminates.†

Shortly after leaving Prad, the road ascends, and soon enters a deep and narrow valley to Gomagoi, where a barrier is established for the examination of passports; and a little beyond, the magnificent mountain of the Ortler-Spitz opens suddenly to the view of the traveller, with a vast and appalling effect, as it is seen from its extreme summit to its base, robed in everlasting snows, which descend on its sides in enormous glaciers, and stream into the valley below the road. Immense masses of rock, in themselves mountains, throw out their black and scathed forms, in striking contrast with the bright-

* The charrette in which the author travelled this route was met on the bridge by another little carriage heavily laden: the bridge was too narrow to allow them to pass, and it was necessary to detach the author's horse, and lift one vehicle over the other.

† The author, in 1826, found it necessary to seek accommodation at Agums, a little village about a mile from Prad, out of the road, towards Glurns.



ness of the glaciers which they separate. The author considers this part of the route, or rather the whole ascent from Drofoi, near to which village the Ortler is first seen in ascending from Prad, as without a parallel in Alpine scenery. The road, which is here admirably constructed, winds round the northern side of the deep ravine into which the glaciers sink, but so near to them, that, in passing, a stone may, with little effort, be thrown upon them; and at the Cantoniére del Bosco, one of the houses of refuge, the glacier is so immediately opposite to, and beneath the road, that travellers, whilst their horses bait, can descend, and examine at ease and in safety this wonderful production of the Alps.

The last pines are left at this place, and the road now ascends by a succession of tourniquets, terraced up the mountain-side towards the Col, and presenting a most extraordinary appearance. There are, from Gomagoi to the summit, nearly fifty zigzag turns in the road, to make the ascent gradual, and facilitate its attainment. On the side towards the ravine, strong palisades of fir-trees assist at once to guard the traveller and to secure the terraces; but these are useless against the avalanches and rocks which fall in the spring; and the devastation which these fearful accidents have produced may be traced in many of the broken palisades, and the ruins of a house of refuge crushed and overthrown. The *rotteri*,* after such accidents, clear and repair the roads: but the disheartening recurrence of these casualties has determined the Austrian government to attempt cutting a gallery through the mountain, nine hundred and seventy feet below the crest of the passage, by which the most exposed part of the road will be avoided. The scene presented on looking back from the summit is inconceivably grand;† in clear weather the entire mass of the Ortler-Spitz is exposed to view; and beneath it, in the deep ravine, the road is seen winding

* Men who are appointed to repair the roads.

† Plate the Second.

its way down the mountain-side, until it is lost in the depth and distance. The summit of this extraordinary pass is the highest in the world which has been made traversable for carriages; it is about 2417 feet higher than the crest of the passage by the Mont Cenis,* and 780 feet higher than the estimated line of perpetual snow in the latitude of the Stelvio: yet the road on the summit is usually clear of snow by the end of July, and continues so, except from occasional falls, until September. A house of refuge is built on the highest point of the passage, and several others are established in convenient situations along the road, between Drofoi and Bormio; at some of these accommodation and refreshment may be had, others merely afford shelter. From the summit, the road winds down by tourniquets to the inn and custom-house on the Monte Brauglio. Formerly the passage of these Alps, from the valley of the Adige to the Valteline, was by the Monte Brauglio and the vale of Munster, the Jura Rætica of Tacitus; but as by this route a small part of the territory of the Grisons was traversed; these jealous and independent mountaineers, resisting the entreaty and bribery of Austria, refused permission to make a military road through their country, or to sell this small portion of their inheritance; and the emperor was constrained to make his new road through the valley of Drofoi and over the Stelvio, a col a thousand feet higher than that of the Brauglio, and where a shepherd's path had scarcely before been traced, to keep within his own territories throughout the new line of military communication between Germany and the Milanese.

The new road derives its name from the village of Stelvi, or Stilfs, which lies a little out of the road, on its western

* The Baron Von Welden states the height of the col of the Stelvio to be 8610 French feet, or 9272 English feet; and that of the Monte Brauglio to be 8279 English feet, or 993 below the Stelvio. This would leave the height above the highest part of the Pass of the Mont Cenis 2598 feet. Or, to convey an idea of the height of the Stelvio to those who have passed the Simplon, the crest of the Pass of the Stelvio is nearly half a mile perpendicularly higher than that of the Simplon.

side, near Gomagoi: the Germans have given the name of the Stilfser-joch to the passage; it is sometimes, however, confounded with the pass of the Monte Brauglio, or Wurmser-joch, formerly a line of considerable commerce, which led from the county of Bormio to the Tyrol and the Grisons, through Santa Maria, and Glurns. At the station of Carabineers, on the Monte Brauglio, where passports are again examined, a poor inn affords welcome refreshment. Immediately below the station is a small plain which yields a fine summer pasturage, but it is surrounded by pinnaled rocks of extremely savage aspect: below this plain, a zigzag road leads down to the Wurmser-loch, a ravine deep and appalling, through which the Adda falls from rock to rock.* The road has been carried high above the left bank of the river, and constructed with so much care and ability, that this, which was formerly one of the most dangerous passages of the Alps, is now rendered secure by galleries, either cut through the projecting rocks, or constructed in masonry:† these guard the traveller from the avalanches which fall from the mountains across the path, or protect him from the precipices which skirt the road through this fearful passage. There are six covered ways, formed either by masonry or excavation, in the ravine; and the extent of the road thus sheltered is 2226 English feet: in some places, however, the road is so cut out of the side of the rocks, where their stability could be relied upon, that, without entirely covering the road, they shelter it from the avalanches which, after sliding over the impending rocks, which are left to guard the passage, fall into the ravine below: in this manner nearly 700 feet more of guarded way have been added to the galleries within the

* Coxe, who passed through the Wurmser-loch in 1779, speaks, in his seventy-third letter, in strong language of the horrors of this scene: the appearance of nature here has scarcely been altered since by the operations of man; but the safety with which the traveller is now conducted through these scenes has removed one source of the sublime.

† Title Vignette.

defile of the Wurmser-loch. Strong palisades guard the side of the road next to the precipices, and the traveller proceeds in perfect safety; but his passage seems to be bounded by rocks and mountains of the wildest aspect, and his way out of the gorge is not apparent, until a sudden turning to the left opens to his view the means of escape, and within a short distance he discovers the valley of Bormio.

A fine road now sweeps down the mountain-side, still leaving on the right the deep bed of the Adda; and on the brink of precipices high above the torrent are seen the baths of Bormio.* The appearance of these baths in such a sterile situation is very striking, particularly from a spot a little below a bridge which has been thrown over a ravine that crosses the road: this bridge, at the upper end, terminates in a gallery cut through the rock, which formerly presented its perpendicular face as a barrier to the progress of the road: but the science of the modern engineer has conquered greater difficulties than these: the rock has been pierced, a bridge thrown over the ravine, and the road is now as regularly continued as if these obstacles had never existed. Bormio† is a place of little actual importance: from its great elevation, though it is rich in pasturage, the arable land produces only a little barley and rye. The construction of the Pass of Monte Stelvio has induced the people of Bormio to hope that their town may again be benefited by the passage of travellers. It was formerly enriched by the transit of merchandise from Venice to the Grisons.

Below Bormio, the road, after traversing the plain towards the Valteline, crosses the Fredolfo, a river which descends from the Val Furba, close to its confluence with the Adda; thence the road continues along the left bank of the Adda, until it crosses it at the defile of La Serra, which was for-

* Plate the Third.

† Called by the Germans Worms; whence Wurmser-loch, &c.



merly the boundary of the district of Bormio, dividing it on the south from the Valteline. This defile was narrow enough to secure the frontier by a wall, and the passage with a gate and chain.

Upon leaving the country of Bormio, expressively called "*il freddo paese*," the river is recrossed, and the traveller descends into the Valteline; the change is rapid to more genial vegetation than the pine and the larch: the chestnut is seen immediately below La Serra; and shortly after, the vine is observed to be extensively cultivated; there is a strikingly rich and luxuriant appearance in the valley near Grosio. The river is passed and repassed before arriving at Mazza; and from this place, seven or eight villages, with their church spires, enliven the rich scene. Near Tirano the valley widens, the road descends, crosses the river, passes through the town of Tirano, and traverses the valley to Madonna, a pleasant little town at the entrance to the valley of Puschio, which leads to the Engadine, by the pass of the Bernina. There is an excellent inn at Madonna; and the church is worthy of the inspection of travellers. From Madonna, the road continues, in its descent to Sondrio, on the right bank of the Adda, passing through numerous picturesque villages. Owing to the neglect of the embankments of the river in some places, the levels of the valley are become swamps, where reeds and grass grow rank, and the marshes are productive of malaria,—the sickly aspect of the inhabitants evinces this; but their squalid appearance is heightened by poverty, and few districts present a more miserable race of people, afflicted as they are with goitres and cretinism, the concomitants of filth. The inns at Sondrio are not equal to what might fairly be expected in the chief town of the Valteline, and where the intercourse occasioned by the passage of the Stelvio must frequently demand good accommodation. In the Piazza Grande of Sondrio is a

colossal bust, on a pedestal, of Francis the First, Emperor of Austria.*

The road continues from the Piazza Grande across the Mallerio, a large stream which passes by Sondrio, and flows into the Adda. The abundant productions of this part of the valley are well known, and the wine of the Valteline has an extensive celebrity; but the vines appear to be ill-trained, and the vineyards mismanaged. Numerous mulberry-trees are cultivated for silk-worms; and the soil is so productive, that two harvests of Indian and other corn are gathered in the year.

The Adda is three times crossed in the descent from Sondrio to Morbegno, whence the road continues on the left of the river to Colico, on the lake of Como.

On the right of the road, before arriving at Colico, the traveller passes the ruins of a fort, which was built in 1604 by the Marquess of Fuentes, at a time when this part of the country was united to the states of Milan. The fort was built on the hill of Montecchio, near the mouth of the Adda; but it is so surrounded by deadly marshes, that it has been the grave of more victims to malaria than to war.

Colico, the port of the Valteline, on the lake of Como, will probably become, from the great line of communication which has been made with Germany through the Valteline, a place of much importance, particularly since the establishment of steam-boats on the lake of Como, which secures the navigation of the lake, from one extremity to the other, in four or five hours.

But a very interesting part of the new road is its intended continuation along the shores of the lake from Colico to Lecco, thus opening a carriage communication between Milan and the Valteline: already the greater part of this vast under-

* Plate the Fourth.

taking has been accomplished ; and when the whole is completed, it will probably offer to the traveller the most beautiful route in Europe for its extent. The engineers have had great difficulties to contend with in removing the rocks, or cutting galleries through those which jut boldly into the lake, and rendering the road secure on the side towards the water. To the voyager on the lake, the scenes where the workmen are employed are very animated.

Just before the author arrived at Lecco, the sound of a drum on the mountain-side where the new road was constructing excited his attention : the boatmen informed him that it was preparatory to the explosion of the mines used in blasting the rocks ; in a few minutes some hundreds of these were discharged, and the magnificent reverberation of the reports from mountain to mountain and on the lake was most impressive.

Lecco is a pleasant little town, in a delightful situation, at the extremity of the eastern branch of the lake which bears the name of the lake of Lecco, though it is only a branch of the lake of Como. Numerous silk-factories and iron-works give it a commercial importance, which is heightened by its favourable situation in the line of the new road to the Valteline. The produce of its environs, the olive, the mulberry-tree, and the vine, are sources of manufacture and commerce.

The situation of Lecco is highly picturesque, opposite to the base of a high mountain which sinks abruptly to the lake.* This mountain is seen not only from Milan, but from far beyond it on the road to Pavia. From Lecco two roads lead to Milan ; one of these, rather the shortest, passes directly through Monza, which has acquired a certain celebrity as the repository of the iron crown of Charlemagne ; the other, and by far the most interesting route, lies through Como by the rich plain of Erba. Immediately below Lecco, where the

* Plate the Fifth.

waters of the lake again become the river Adda, a bridge crosses the stream, beyond which the different roads to Milan divide. That which leads to Como is an excellent carriage-road, entering the valley immediately below the high mountain which is opposite to Lecco. After a short passage through this valley, the prospect opens upon scenes of striking richness and beauty, which are little known to English travellers, and which continue throughout the journey to Como. The road passes by several beautiful lakes, particularly that of Pusiano, and at the bases of hills covered with chestnuts and vines, whilst olives, mulberry-trees, Indian corn, and other productions of a generous soil and climate, cover in profuse abundance this favoured country. Numerous villages, and the towns of Incino* and Erba, inhabited by a fine race of people, are traversed by this road; and the inhabitants of this charming district appear to participate in its character of prosperity, enjoyment, and repose. The approach to Como presents one of the most beautiful views in which this city is an object: it is seen, far below the vineyards which skirt the road, deeply embosomed in the mountains; the Duomo, and part of the city of Como, are seen bordering upon the lake, which in this view is almost hidden by the surrounding hills. On the left is the monastery of San Salvatore, in a commanding situation; and above Como are its conical hills, surmounted by castellated ruins. Beyond the hills which surround the lake, the Alps are seen stretching across the horizon, and conspicuous among these is the beautiful form of Monte Rosa.†

Como itself is a place of great interest: its early history, the great men which it has produced, its importance and exposure during the wars of the Middle Ages, render an inquiry into its history one of considerable interest. From Como, the direct road to Milan by Barlasina is dull and monotonous; but this may be varied by a little *détour* to Monza, and a visit to the gardens of the Villa Reale.

* Anciently, Licino Forum, one of the towns of the Orobii. † Plate the Sixth.







The importance of the communication which has been opened between Milan and Austria by the Stelvio, does not arise from recent political relations: it has always been considered essential to the maintenance of the Austrian influence or government in Italy, that access should be had to the Milanese by the Monte Brauglio and the Valteline. Prior to the accession of the Milanese to Austria, the infamous and unchristian assumption of temporal power by the Bishops of Como and Coire subjected the wretched inhabitants of Chiavenna, the Valteline, and Bormio, to the sufferings which their feuds occasioned: the causes sometimes varied, but the inflictions continued for centuries; and their political or religious relations exposed them to oppression from the monarchial tyranny of distant potentates, or the republican tyranny of their neighbours the Grisons.

In 1336, these valleys fell under the dominion of Azzo Visconti, duke of Milan; one of whose successors, in gratitude for some political treachery, ceded his right over these territories to the Bishop of Coire. This became the basis of a claim which the Grisons afterwards made to the fealty of the inhabitants of Bormio and the Valteline, and an unsuccessful irruption was made into these valleys by the Grisons in 1487. In 1512, when the whole of the valleys from the Brauglio to the lake of Como fell with the Milanese into the power of Louis the Twelfth of France, by his conquest of Ludovico, duke of Milan, the Grisons, in conjunction with the Bishop of Coire, entered the Valteline, expelled the French, and received the homage of the inhabitants: their possession of it was confirmed by Maximilian Sforza, upon his recovery of the ducal crown of Milan; and again ratified by Francis the First when he obtained possession of the Milanese. In 1530, the Grisons compelled the Bishop of Coire to sell his share of the sovereignty of these valleys; and it continued in their possession until the rival interests of France and Spain, contending for the passage of the Valteline, led to scenes of violence which were increased by the intrigues of the pope

and the religious dissensions of the inhabitants ; at length it reached its climax in the horrible catastrophe of a massacre or expulsion of all the Protestants in those valleys, at the details of which the heart sickens.

When Charles the Fifth succeeded to the Milanese as a fief reverting to the empire, he saw the importance of possessing the Valteline as a passage by which to secure the junction of the troops of Spain and Austria. It was the policy of the French court to defeat this measure; and in the struggles between those great powers, in the wars to which their jealousies gave rise, the inhabitants of these valleys were the chief sufferers: and, as if this measure of suffering were not enough, religious animosity heightened it to the outrages of the 20th of July, 1620,—the date of the massacre in the Valteline, which has no parallel but in the dreadful events of the fête of St. Bartholomew in France.

After long-continued contests, the passage, which was the object of the war, was secured to the Spaniards by treaty in 1635. There was little political change in these valleys from that time until 1797, when the Valteline and the county of Bormio, which had continued *baillages* of the Grisons, were separated from this government, and, together with Chiavenna, incorporated in the Cisalpine republic. Upon the restoration of the Milanese to Austria in 1814, these countries were conceded in perpetuity as a part of its dominions in Lombardy: and the Austrian government, following the example of Napoleon, felt the importance of opening a free and direct communication with its Milanese states. This great undertaking has been accomplished by the construction of the new military road across the Stelvio.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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